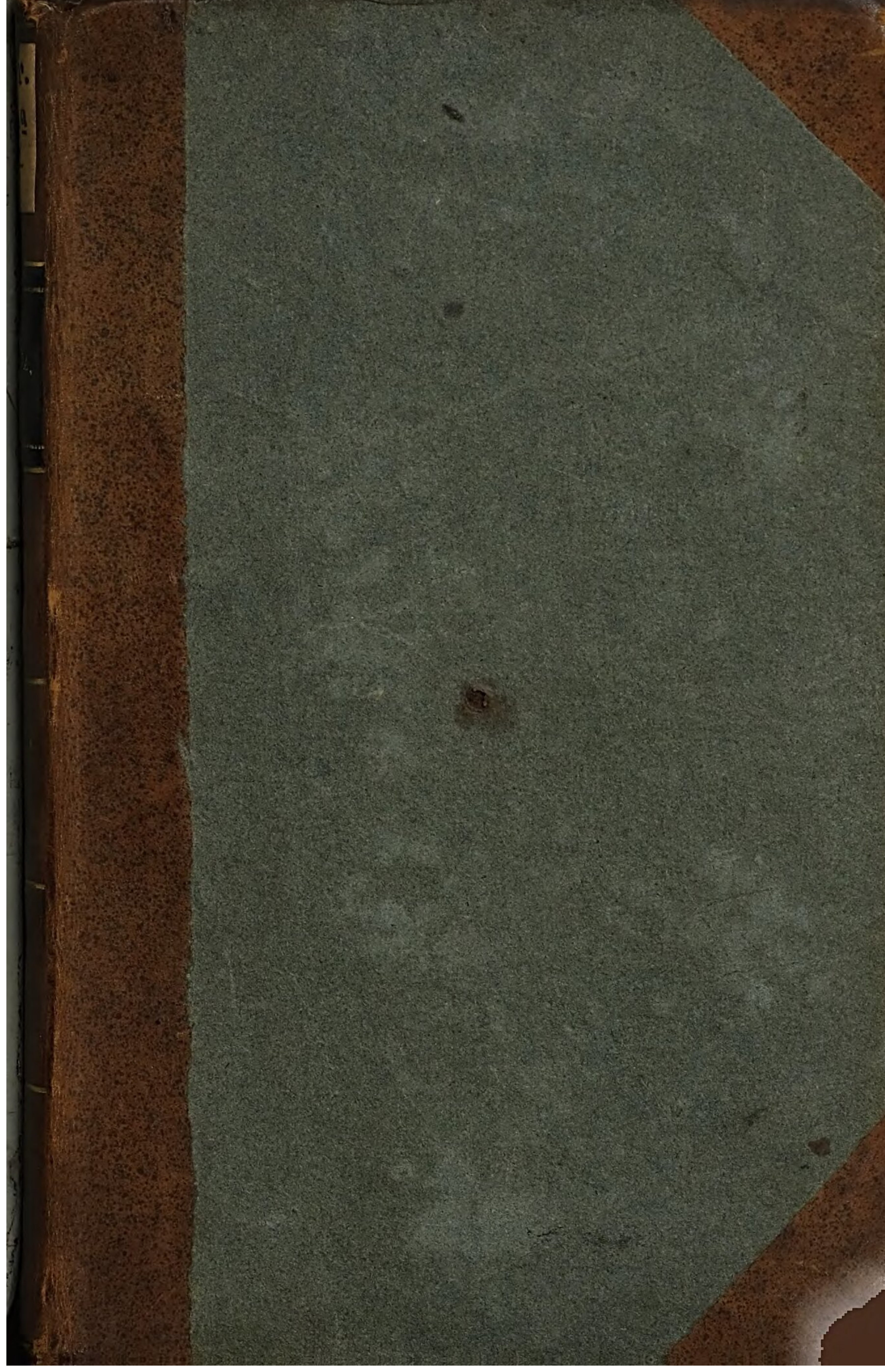




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Handwritten signature or text, possibly "James" or "John", written in cursive script.

Isabella Gordon

CORINNA;

OR,

ITALY.

BY MAD. DE STAËL HOLSTEIN.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY D. LAWLER.

. Udralla il bel paese,
Ch' Apennin partè, e'l mar circonda, et l'Alpe.

PETRARCH.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

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CORINNA.

BOOK XIV.

America by Corin
The History of Corinna.

CHAPTER I.

OSWALD, I am about to begin by the confession which must decide the fate of my life; if, after having read this alone, you find it impossible to pardon me, do not finish this letter, but cast me from you; but if when you are acquainted with the name and the destiny which I have renounced, all is not broken off between us, read on: What you will afterwards learn may serve for my excuse.

Lord Edgermond was my father; I was born in Italy, of his first wife, who was a Roman, and Lucilia Edgermond, who was

destined for your bride, is my paternal sister; she is the fruit of the second marriage of my father with an English-woman.

Now hear me. Brought up in Italy, I lost my mother when I was only ten years of age; but as in dying, she had testified an extreme desire that my education might be finished before I should go to England, my father left me to the care of an aunt by my mother's side, 'till I had attained the age of fifteen years; my talents, my taste, even my character, were formed, when the death of my aunt determined my father to send for me home. He lived in a little town of Northumberland, which I suppose cannot give any idea of England, but is all I know of it during the six years which I passed there. My mother had from my infancy, talked of nothing but the misfortune of not living in Italy, and my aunt had often repeated to me, that

the dread of quitting her native country had accelerated the death of my parent. My good aunt also persuaded herself that a Catholic was damned by living in a Protestant country ; and though I did not partake of this fear, nevertheless, it was natural that I should feel an aversion to going to England.

I set out for that country with an inexpressible sentiment of melancholy. The woman who was sent to fetch me away did not understand Italian ; it is true, I could talk it a little now and then, by stealth, with my poor Theresa, who had consented to follow me, though she incessantly bewailed leaving her native country ; but I was no longer to be habituated to those harmonious sounds, so pleasing even to foreigners, and whose charm was for me blended with all the soft recollections of infancy. As I approached the north, a sad and gloomy sensation seized on me,

the cause of which I could not clearly divine. I arrived at my father's after an absence of five years. I hardly knew him again: he seemed to have become more grave since last I saw him; however, he received me very tenderly, and repeated with fondness that I greatly resembled my mother. My little sister, who was then three years of age, was brought to me; her skin was the most fair, and her silken hair the most white I had ever seen. I regarded her with astonishment, for we hardly ever see a figure like her's in Italy; but she interested me warmly, and that very day I took a lock of her hair to make a bracelet, which I have preserved ever since. At last my mother-in-law appeared, and the impression I received, the first moment she struck my sight, has constantly increased during the six years I passed with her.

Lady Edgermond was exclusively at-

tached to the county in which she was born ; and my father, who was entirely governed by her, sacrificed to this attachment his own predilection for London or Edinburgh. She was cold, dignified, and taciturn ; her eyes betrayed sensibility when turned upon her daughter ; but there was something so positive in the expression of her physiognomy, and in her conversation, that it appeared almost impossible, she could hear an idea, or even a word, that was not familiar to her. She received me kindly ; but I easily perceived that my whole manner surprized her, and that she determined to alter it, if possible. Not a word was spoken during dinner ; although several of the neighbouring gentry were guests : so weary was I of this silence, that in the midst of the meal, I endeavoured to converse a little with an elderly gentleman who was seated next to me. I had a to-

lerable knowledge of English, which my father had taught me from my infancy, and I cited in conversation some Italian verses, extremely pure and delicate, but in which mention was made of love: My mother-in-law, who understood Italian a little, looked at me, blushed, and then gave the signal to the ladies much sooner than was customary, to retire in order to prepare tea, and leave the gentlemen alone at table during the dessert. I knew nothing of this custom, which excites much surprise in Italy, where they can form no idea of pleasure in society without the presence of the ladies; and I believed, for a moment, that Lady Edgermond was so angry with me, that she would not stay in the room where I was. However, I took heart, because she beckoned me to follow her, and did not reproach me with any thing during the three hours that we

passed together in the parlour, before we were joined by the male part of the company.

My mother-in-law, however, at supper, told me very mildly, that it was not the custom for young ladies to speak in company, and that above all they ought never to cite verses which contained the word love.---
“ Miss Edgermond,” added she, “ You must endeavour to forget every thing that belongs to Italy ; it is a country which I could wish you had never known.”

I passed the night in weeping; for my heart was oppressed with sadness. In the morning I went out to walk ; but the sun, which was all that I could find here to remind me of Italy, was obscured by a thick fog. I met with my father, who, on coming up with me said : “ My dear child, it is not here as in Italy, women, amongst us, have no other employment than domestic duties ; the talents which you possess will

serve to relieve the irksomeness of solitude, perhaps, also, you may meet with a husband to whom they would be agreeable ; but, in a little town like this, all that attracts attention excites envy, and you would never find a partner for life, if it were believed that your manners and taste were foreign to ours ; in this part, our mode of life must be subjected to the ancient customs of a distant province. I have passed twelve years with your mother in Italy, and their recollection is sweet to me ; I was then young, and pleased with novelty ; now I am returned to settle at home, and find myself at ease ; a regular life, though a little monotonous, makes time pass away imperceptibly. But we must not combat the manners of a country in which we are settled, or we shall suffer for it ; for in a town so small as that in which we live, every thing is known, every thing is noised about ; there is no room

for emulation, but much for jealousy ; and it is better to support a little *ennui* than to encounter continually the countenance of astonishment and malignity enquiring every instant the reason of your actions."

You could never, my dear Oswald, form an idea of the pain which I experienced, in hearing my father talk thus, I recalled his image, full of grace and vivacity, such as I had known him in my infancy, and I beheld him now bending beneath that leaden cloak which Dante describes in the infernal regions, and which mediocrity throws on the shoulders of those who fall beneath its yoke ; the enthusiasm of nature, of sentiment, and of the fine arts, all vanished from my sight, and my soul, like an useless fire, having nothing to feed it from without, preyed on myself. As I am naturally meek, my mother-in-law had no reason to complain of my conduct to her, and my father much less, for I loved

him tenderly ; and it was only in his conversation that I could yet find pleasure. He was resigned to his fate, but sensible of it ; whilst the greater part of our country gentlemen, drinking, hunting, and sleeping, think they lead the wisest and most pleasant life in the world.

So troubled was I at beholding their contentment, that I asked myself whether it was not my own mode of thinking that was foolish ; and if this existence, entirely corporeal, as free from thought as from pain, from reflection as from feeling, was not preferable to my mode of being ; but of what use would this sad conviction have been to me ? To make me lament the possession of my own faculties as a misfortune, whilst in Italy they were considered as brightest of celestial endowments.

Among the ladies of our acquaintance there were many who did not want intellect ; but they extinguished it as a trouble-

some light, and commonly towards forty years of age, this little mental animation became benumbed like all the rest of their composition. Towards the end of autumn, my father frequently went a hunting, and we sometimes were obliged to sit up for him till midnight. During his absence, I remained in my chamber the greatest part of the day, to cultivate my talents, and Lady Edgermond was vexed at it. "What purpose will all this answer," said she to me, "will it make you more happy?" This word distracted me: "In what does happiness consist then," said I to myself, "if not in the development of our faculties? Is it not better to die physically than morally? If I must stifle my genius and my mind, of what use is it to drag on a miserable existence, which to me is without use?" I was very careful, however, not to speak thus in presence of my mother-in-law. I had ven-

tured an observation of the kind once or twice ; but she had answered me that a woman was only intended to watch over the household concerns of her husband, and the health of her children ; that every other pretension could only be productive of evil, and that the best advice she could give me was to conceal such, if I had any ; and this speech, common as it was, appeared to me unanswerable ; for emulation and enthusiasm, those authors of mind and genius stand in need of encouragement in a most singular manner, and wither like the flowers beneath a cold or gloomy sky.

There is nothing so easy as to assume a very moral air in condemning all that depends upon an elevated mind. The duty, the most noble destination of man, may be perverted like every other idea, and become an hostile weapon for narrow minded men ; for the self-satisfied sons of medio-

crity to impose silence on talent, to rid themselves of enthusiasm, of genius, of every thing in fact which is inimical to them. One would say, in hearing them, that duty consists in the sacrifice of those distinguished faculties which we possess, and that intellect is a crime which we must expiate in leading precisely the same life as those who lack it. But, is it true, that duty prescribes to every character similar rules? Are not great thoughts and generous sentiments, in this world, the debt of those capable of discharging it? Ought not every woman, as well as every man, to open a path for herself agreeable to her character and her talents? And is it necessary to imitate the instinct of Castors, whose generations succeed each other without difference or distinction?

Pardon, Oswald, the pride of Corinna; but I believed myself formed for another destiny; I feel myself as subjected to what

I love as those females by whom I was surrounded, and who neither indulged their mind in an opinion, nor their hearts in a desire; were it your pleasure to pass the remainder of your days in the remotest part of Scotland, I should be happy to live and die there with you; but far from checking my imagination, it would heighten my enjoyment of life; and the more the dominion of my mind should be extended, the more glory and happiness I should find in declaring you its master.

My mother-in-law was almost as much offended at my ideas as my actions; it was not sufficient that I should lead the same life as she, but it must also be from the same motives; for she would have every faculty which she did not possess, considered merely as an imperfection. We lived very near the sea-coast, and the bleak north wind was often felt in our castle.; I heard it whistle along the cor-

ridors at night, and when we were assembled together by day, it favoured our silence. The weather was damp and cold, I could hardly ever go out without feeling a painful sensation; there was something hostile in nature which made me bitterly regret the genial mildness of Italian scenes.

We resided during winter in the town, if that could be so called which afforded neither spectacle, edifice, music, or painting—it was an assemblage of gossips, a collection of every thing that is irksome.

Birth, marriage, and death, composed the whole history of our society, and these three events were there less different than any where else. Figure to yourself the situation of an Italian like me, seated round a tea-table for several hours in the day, after dinner, with no other society than my mother-in-law, and the company

she kept. Her circle was composed of seven of the most demure ladies in the county; two of them were maidens of fifty, with all the timidity of fifteen, without the cheerfulness of that age. One of the ladies would say to the other: '*My dear, do you think that the water is boiled sufficiently to pour on the tea?*' '*My dear,*' replied the other, '*I believe it would be too soon; for the gentlemen are not yet ready to come.*' '*Will they stay long at table to day,*' said a third, '*What do you think, my dear?*' '*I dont know,*' replied the fourth, '*I should suppose they are talking about the election which is to begin next week.*' '*No;*' observed the fifth, '*I rather think they are discoursing about the Fox-chace which takes place next Monday, and with which they have been so much taken up all the week; however, I should suppose, dinner would soon be over.*' '*I dont much ex-*

pect it,' said the sixth, with a sigh, and silence was resumed. I had been in a convent in Italy; I could not support its dull monotony, and yet it was a scene of cheerfulness compared with the present circle.

Every quarter of an hour the silence was broken by some insipid question, which received a most frigid answer, and this relief from *ennui* only made it fall with additional weight upon those women whom we should suppose wretched, if habit from their earliest infancy, had not taught them to bear with every thing. At length the *gentlemen* joined us, and this moment, so long expected, did not bring much additional pleasure to the ladies: the men continued their conversation by the side of the fire, whilst the women remained at the farther end of the room distributing the tea; and when the hour of departure arrived, they went home with their hus-

bands, ready to begin again, on the morrow, an existence which only differed from that of the preceding day, by the date of the almanac, and the trace of years, which in time furrows their cheeks as if they had really tasted life.

I cannot conceive now, how the talent I possess, could escape the freezing mortality by which I was surrounded; for it must not be concealed, there are two ways of viewing a subject: We may boast of enthusiasm, or we may censure it; activity, repose, vanity, monotony, are capable of being attacked and defended by divers arguments; we may panegirise life, and yet there is much to be said in praise of death, or that which resembles it. It is not true then, that we can basely despise the observations of mediocre people, they penetrate in spite of us, to the bottom of our minds, they await us at the very moment when our superiority be-

comes painful to ourselves, in order to assail us with a “*Well*,” very tranquil, and moderate in appearance ; but which is nevertheless, the hardest word we can possibly hear ; for we can only support envy in that country where it is excited by that admiration which talents inspire ; but what greater misfortune can we suffer than to live where superiority gives birth to envy, but not to enthusiasm ; where our power is hated, when perhaps we are weaker than an obscure being ! Such was my situation in this narrow abode ; I only made a noise which was troublesome to every body, and I could not, as at London or Edinburgh, meet with those superior men, enlightened by extensive judgment and knowledge, who, feeling a want of the inexhaustible treasures of mind and conversation, would have found some charm in the discourse of a stranger,

though it might not in every thing be conformable to the severity of local custom.

I sometimes passed whole days in my mother-in-laws parties, without hearing a word correspondent either to an idea or a sentiment. They did not even indulge themselves in speaking, with a single gesture; young girls were seen, in all the bloom of youth, motionless as statues; singular contrast between nature and society! Every age had similar pleasures: they took tea, they played at whist, and the women grew old on the same spot, and in the same occupations: Old Time could not miss them in his course, since he always knew where to find them.

There are in the smallest towns of Italy, a theatre, music, people of genius, and a sun which seems to warm every bosom with admiration of the arts; in effect, we there feel that we are alive; but

in the county I now inhabited, I was hardly sensible of my own existence, and methinks that a mechanical figure, could very well have filled my place in society. As in every part of England there are interests which are an honour to humanity, men in whatever retreat they may live, have always the means of worthily occupying their leisure ; but nothing could be more insipid than the life of women in that isolated corner where I was thrust. There were, indeed, some whose minds were unfolded by nature and reflection, and I had discovered, some accents, some looks, and some words spoken in a low voice, which were out of the common line ; but the contracted opinions of this contracted circle ruled with omnipotent influence, and entirely destroyed those germs which reared into life, would have given their possessor the air of a perverted mind, or a woman whose virtue was doubtful ; what was worse

these evils had no advantages to counter-balance them.

At first I endeavoured to rouse this sleepy circle, by proposing to them to read verses and compose music. A day was set apart for this purpose; but all on a sudden, one lady recollected that she had been invited three weeks ago to sup with her aunt; another that she was in mourning for an old cousin, whom she had never seen, and who had been dead during some months, and a third, that she had some domestic arrangements to make in her household; all that was very reasonable; but what vexed me was, that the pleasures of the imagination and mind were continually sacrificed, and my ear was so often greeted with "*It is out of my power,*" that among so many negatives, to decline living at all, seemed to me the most adviseable.

For my own part, after some struggles

with my nature, I had renounced every vain attempt to enliven this dull region ; not that my father had prohibited them, he had even prevailed on my mother-in-law to give over tormenting me upon that subject ; but insinuations and stolen looks, whilst I was speaking, a thousand little restrictions like the bonds with which the pigmy nation encircled Gulliver, rendered me unable to move, and at length I assumed externally the same manners as the rest of my acquaintance, whilst I was internally devoured with *ennui*, impatience, and disgust. I had already passed four years in this manner, but what afflicted me most, was, that I felt my talents diminish, and my mind imperceptibly assimilating with those about me ; for in a society where no interest is felt for the sciences, for literature, for painting, or for music ; where imagination, in fact, seems entirely banished, conversation be-

comes necessarily made up of trifles, and the mind, stranger alike to activity or to meditation, becomes narrowed, and renders the relations of society at once painful and dull.

In such a society every enjoyment is confined to a certain methodical regularity, which suits those whose desire is to efface all superiority, in order to reduce mankind to their level ; but this uniformity, dooms to habitual grief, characters called to a higher and more appropriate destiny ; the bitter sentiment of malignity which I unknowingly excited, was joined to an oppression of spirits caused by that vacuum which prevented me from breathing. In vain do we say such a man is unable to form a judgment of me, or such a woman is incapable of comprehending me ; the human countenance exercises great power over the human heart ; and when we read in that countenance a secret disapproba-

tion, it makes us uneasy in spite of ourselves. In effect, the circle by which we are surrounded, conceals from us the rest of the world, as the least object placed before our eye intercepts the sight of the sun : Neither Europe, nor posterity, could render us insensible to the noise of an adjoining house ; therefore, whoever wishes to be happy, and develope her genius, must, before all things, make a prudent choice of the atmosphere by which she is to be immediately surrounded.

CHAP. II.

THE education of my little sister was my only amusement; my mother-in-law would not permit her to be taught music; but she had allowed me to instruct her in Italian and drawing, and I am persuaded that she has not forgotten them; for I owe her the justice to say, that, even then, she manifested considerable intelligence. Oswald, Oswald! if it be for your happiness, that I have taken all this trouble, I shall glory in it----even in the tomb!

I was nearly twenty years of age, my father wished to marry me, and upon this

hinges my fate. My father was the intimate friend of your's ; and it is you, Oswald, that he thought of for my spouse. Had we but known each other then, and had you but loved me, what a cloudless destiny were our's ! I had heard you spoken of with so much praise, that whether from presentiment or from pride, I was extremely flattered with the hope of being united to you. You were too young for me, since I was the elder by eighteen months ; but your mind and your taste for study, it was said, anticipated maturer years, and I formed so sweet an idea of life, passed with such a character as your's was described to be, that this hope entirely effaced my prejudices against the mode of life allotted to English wives. I knew, besides, that it was your wish to settle in London or Edinburgh, and I was certain of finding in these two capitals the most distinguished society. I then

said to myself, what I now believe, that all the unhappiness of my situation proceeded from living in a little confined town, in the extremity of a northern county. Great cities alone are suitable to these characters which form exceptions from the common rule, when they wish to live in society, the charms of novelty are to be found there, where life is varied ; but in those places where we have assumed a tolerably mild habit of monotony, we are not pleased with that occasional enjoyment which, by comparison, tinges the rest of our days with *ennui*.

I take pleasure in repeating it, Oswald, though I had never seen you, I expected your father, who was to come and spend a week at our house, with real anxiety ; and this sentiment was then so divested of motive, that it must have been a harbinger of my fate. When Lord Nelville arrived, I was desirous of pleasing him ;

too much so, perhaps, and took more pains than was necessary for that purpose. I displayed all my talents before him, I danced, I sang, I *improvisated*, and my genius so long confined, was, perhaps, too wild in breaking its chains. Seven years experience since that period has altered me ; I am less forward to shew my talents ; I know myself better ; I have more deliberation ; I have, perhaps, less confidence in the good disposition of others ; but I have also less ardour for their applauses ; in effect, it is possible, that there was then something uncouth about me. We have so much fire, so much imprudence in our first youth ! we dart forward in life with so much vivacity ! The mind, however cultivated, will never supply the want of years ; for though we may be able to discourse of mankind as if we knew them, we do not act according

to our own perceptions ; we have a kind of fever in our ideas which does not permit us to conform our conduct to our reasonings.

I believe, without knowing it to a certainty, that I appeared to Lord Nelville of too volatile a disposition ; for, after having passed eight days at our house, and behaving to me, nevertheless, with the greatest kindness, he took his leave, and shortly after wrote to my father, that upon every reflection, he thought his son too young to conclude the marriage in question. What importance, Oswald, will you attach to this confession ? I might have concealed from you this circumstance of my life, and I have not done it. Will it, however, condemn me in your estimation ? Were your father to see me now, meliorated and improved, as I am become after seven years experience, would he be-

hold, without emotion, my tenderness and enthusiasm for you! No, Oswald, he loved you, and would have smiled upon us.

My mother-in-law formed the project of marrying me to the son of her eldest brother, who possessed an estate in our neighbourhood; he was about thirty years of age, of good fortune, fine figure, illustrious birth, extremely well-bred, but so perfectly convinced of the authority which a husband should maintain over his wife, and of the humble and domestic sphere to which that wife ought to be confined, that he would have revolted at a doubt on this subject as much as if his honour or probity had been called in question. Mr. Maclinson (that was his name), had a considerable liking for me, and what was said in the town of my mental acquirements, and my singular character, did not give him the least uneasiness. There was so much order in his house, every thing

there proceeded so regularly, at the same hour, and in the same manner, that it was impossible for any body to alter it. The two old aunts who directed the household, the domestics, and even the horses, would not have known how to do any thing one day different from the day before; and the furniture which had witnessed this kind of life for three generations, would, I believe, have started with astonishment, if any novelty had appeared to it. Mr. Maclinson was then in the right not to fear my arrival in this region of monotony; the weight of custom was there so powerful, that the little liberty I should have taken, might have enlivened the scene for about a quarter of an hour in a week; but certainly could have produced no other consequence.

He was a good man, incapable of wounding any person's feelings; but if I had spoken to him of those innumerable

sources of chagrin to which an active and sensible mind is subject, he would have considered me as troubled with the vapours, and merely advise me to ride out in the air. He was desirous of espousing me, because he did not suspect the wants of the mind and of the imagination, and was pleased with me without comprehending my character. Had he a single idea of what a distinguished woman was, and of the advantages and inconveniences to which she is liable, he would have been apprehensive of not being sufficiently amiable in my eyes; but this sort of uneasiness never even entered his head: judge of my repugnance for such a marriage. I positively declined it; my father took my part; but my mother-in-law was inflamed with resentment at my refusal. She was of a most despotic temper at bottom, and though her timidity often hindered her from expressing her will, yet she desired

that it should be anticipated ; but when, after having divulged it, she found it resisted, it was so much the more difficult to pardon, from the difficulty she had found in breaking through her accustomed reserve.

The whole town blamed me in the most decided manner. So suitable a match, such a good fortune, so estimable a man, so respectable a family ; such was the general cry ! I endeavoured to explain why this *suitable* match, did not *suit me* ; but my trouble was thrown away. Sometimes I was understood when I spoke ; but as soon as I was gone, my words left no trace behind ; for then habitual ideas immediately entered the heads of my auditors, and they received with new pleasure those old acquaintances which I had for a moment removed.

One of the most intelligent women that I had met with in this part, though she

externally conformed to its local manners, took me aside one day, after I had spoken with more vivacity than ordinary, and said :----“ You give yourself a great deal of trouble to attain an impossible result: you will not change the nature of things; a little northern town, unconnected with the rest of the world, without a taste for literature and the arts, cannot become any other than what it is; if you are to live in these parts, you must submit, or remove yourself away if you can, these are your only alternatives.”---This reasoning was but too evident; I felt a consideration for this lady which I had not for myself; for with a taste very analogous to mine, she had resigned herself to that destiny which I could not support; and her love for poetry and ideal enjoyments, only enabled her to form a better judgment of the force of circumstances, and the obstinacy of

man. I was very desirous of seeing her often, but in vain ; her mind out-stepped this narrow circle, but her body was confined within its narrow limits ; I even believe that she feared to awaken her natural superiority by our conversation ; of what service would it be to her ?

CHAP. III.

I SHOULD, however, have passed my whole life in this deplorable situation, if I had preserved my father; but a sudden accident deprived me of him: with him I lost my protector and my friend, the only one whose ear was inclined to my complainings in this peopled desert, and my despair was such, that I was no longer able to resist my impressions. I was twenty years of age when he died, and I found myself with no other support, no other relation than Lady Edgermond, to whom, after living five years together, I was no more attached than I had been the first day.

She now resumed the subject of Mr. Mac-linson, and though she had not the right to command my inclinations, she received none but him at her house, and gave me to understand, pretty plainly, that she would countenance no other marriage. It was not that she was much attached to Mr. Maclinson, although he was her near relation; but she thought me disdainful in refusing him, and made a common cause with her nephew, more in the defense of mediocrity, than out of love for her family.

Every day my situation became more odious; I felt myself seized with the malady of the country; the most painful melancholy that can take possession of the soul. Exile is, sometimes, for characters of acute sensibility, a more cruel punishment than death itself; imagination is displeased at every surrounding object, the climate, the country, the language, the

customs, life altogether, and life in its minutiae; every moment, and every situation has its concomitant pain; for our native country affords us a thousand habitual pleasures, which we do not know ourselves till we have lost them:

- - - - *La favella, i costumi*
L'aria, i tronchi, il terren, le mura, i sassi!

METASTASIO.

It is an exquisite grief no longer to behold those scenes in which we have passed our infancy: the recollections of that age, by a peculiar charm, renovate the heart, and yet soften the idea of death. When the tomb is erected in the neighbourhood of the cradle, our whole life seems to have passed under the same umbragous shelter; while those years which have been spent beneath a foreign sun, are like branches without a root. The generation which precedes you has not beheld your

birth; it is not for you the generation of fathers, the generation which has fostered and protected your youth; you feel a thousand interests in common with those of your own country, which foreigners do not understand; with the latter every thing must be explained and commented upon, instead of that easy communication, that effusion of thought, which begins the moment we meet again our fellow citizens. I could not recollect, without emotion, the benignant expressions of my country. *Cara, Carissima*, I would say to myself sometimes, walking alone, to imitate the amicable way in which you are accosted by the Italians; I compared this mode of address with that I was in the habit of experiencing.

Every day I wandered about the country, where, instead of those harmonious airs, sung with such perfect melody, which I was accustomed to hear on an evening

in Italy, my ears were assailed with the croaking of ravens. The brilliant sun and gentle air of my native country was here replaced by fogs; the fruit scarcely ripened, the vine was not to be seen; the flowers grew languishingly, and at a distance from each other; the fir-trees covered the mountains all the year, like a dark vestment: an ancient edifice, even a picture, a fine picture would have refreshed my soul: but I should have sought it in vain for thirty miles round. All was dull, all was silent about me, and the habitation of the place only served to deprive solitude of that poetical horror which inspires the soul with a pleasing kind of dread! True, here was ease, with a little commerce and cultivation around us; enough, in fact, to be told; “*you ought to be satisfied, you want for nothing.*” Stupid judgment, formed upon externals, when the abode of happiness and suffering is in

the most intimate, and most secret sanctuary of our own souls !

At twenty-one years of age I was naturally to take possession of my mother's fortune, and of that which my father had left me: for once, then, it came into my mind, since I was an orphan, and of age, to return to Italy, and lead an independant life, entirely consecrated to the arts, when this project entered my mind, I was intoxicated with happiness, and did not at first conceive the possibility of an objection. However, when my fever of hope had a little subsided, I was terrified at this irreparable resolution, and figuring to myself what would be thought of it by all my acquaintance, this project, which seemed at first so easy, now appeared wholly impracticable; but nevertheless, the image of a life surrounded by all the recollections of antiquity, of painting, and music, had presented itself to me with so many mul-

tiplied charms, that I had taken fresh disgust at my present irksome existence.

My talents, which I was fearful of losing, had increased by the application I had made to the study of English literature; the profound manner of thinking, and feeling, which characterises your poets, had fortified my mind and soul, without my having lost any thing of that lively imagination which seems to belong only to the inhabitants of our country. I could therefore believe myself destined to peculiar advantages, by the union of uncommon circumstances, which had given me a double education; and if I may express myself thus, two different nationalities. I remembered the approbation which a small number of excellent judges had bestowed in Florence, upon my first attempt at poetry. I felt elevated at the prospect of fame: is not this the first and noblest illusion of youth?

It seemed to me that I should enter into the possession of the universe on the day when I should no longer feel the freezing breath of malevolent mediocrity; but when I was about to form a resolution to depart secretly, I felt myself restrained by opinion, which had more powerful influence upon me in England than in Italy; for though I might not love the little town which I inhabited, I respected the whole country, of which it formed a part. If Lady Edgermond had deigned to conduct me to London, or Edinburgh, if she had thought of uniting me to a man of sufficient intellect to place a proper value upon that which I possessed, I should never have renounced either my name or my family, not even for my native country; in fact, however hard the dominion of my mother-in-law might be, I could never have summoned up resolution enough to change my situation, had not a multitude

of circumstances combined to fix my wavering mind.

I was attended by my *femme de chambre*, Theresa, whom you know ; she is a Tuscan, and tho' her mind has not been cultivated, she makes use of those noble and harmonious expressions which give so much grace to the most trifling conversation of our people. It was only with her that I spoke Italian ; and this was to me a bond of attachment. I often beheld her sad, and dared not ask her the cause ; suspecting that, like me, she regretted her native country, and fearing that I should no longer be able to restrain my own feelings if they were excited by those of another. There are sufferings which are softened by communicating them ; but those of the imagination are increased by the same means ; especially when we perceive in another a grief similar to our own. The ill we suffer then appears invincible, and we no longer try to

combat it. My poor Theresa became at last, on a sudden, seriously indisposed, and hearing her groan night and day, I determined at last to ask her the cause of her grief. What was my astonishment on hearing from her almost a copy of my own feelings! She had not reflected so deeply as me upon the cause of her pain; she imputed it more to local circumstances, to particular persons; but the gloominess of the country, the insipidity of the town in which we lived, the coldness of the inhabitants, and the constraint of their habits; she felt exquisitely without being able to account for it, and cried inscesantly—"O my country, shall I never then see you again!" Notwithstanding, however, she added, that she would not leave me; and with a bitterness that grieved my heart, she lamented that she was unable to reconcile with her attachment to me her beautiful Italian sky, and the pleasure of hearing the sweet accents of her mother tongue.

Nothing produced so much effect upon my mind, as this reflection of my own impressions in a person who, though of an ordinary rank, had preserved the character and the taste of the Italians in their natural vivacity ; and I promised her that she should behold Italy again. — “ With you ? ” asked she ; I was silent. Then she tore her hair, and vowed she would never leave me ; whilst in uttering these words she appeared ready to expire. At length an assurance escaped me that I would also return to Italy, with no other view than to tranquillize her mind ; but this assurance became more serious from the inexpressible joy that it caused her, and the confidence which she placed in it. From that moment, without saying any thing about it, she formed an acquaintance with some merchants of the town, and informed me the exact day when a vessel was to sail for Genoa, or Leghorn ; I heard her without

making any answer: She also imitated my silence, but her eyes were swimming in tears. My health became impaired every day, as well from the climate as from my internal sufferings; my mind had need of action and gaiety.— I have often told you that grief would kill me.— The struggle would be too much—I must yield her absolute sway if I would not sink immediately.

I therefore reversed frequently to the idea which had occupied me since the death of my father; but I dotingly loved Lucilia, then in the ninth year of her age, and whom from her sixth I had cherished with the fondness of a mother.— It one day entered my head that if I absconded secretly, I should do such an injury to my reputation, that the good name of my sister would suffer from it; and this fear made me for a time renounce my projects. However, one evening when I was

more afflicted than ever with the painful melancholy that oppressed me, as well from the conduct of my mother-in-law, as that of the society in which I lived, I found myself alone at supper with Lady Edgermond, and after an hour's silence, I was suddenly seized with such disgust at her unalterable coldness, that I began a conversation, by complaining of the life which I led, more with a view of forcing her to speak, than from the hope of any interesting result; but, becoming animated, I suddenly put, by way of supposition, the possibility, in a situation like mine, of my quitting England for ever. My mother-in-law was not in the least concerned at my observations; but with a *sang-froid* and apathy, which I shall never forget as long as I live, said to me:—"You are one and twenty, Miss Edgermond, thus your mother's fortune, and that which your father has left you, are entirely at your own disposal. You are

therefore your own mistress, and can act as you please ; but if you act a dishonorable part in the opinion of the world, it is a duty you owe your family to change your name, and give yourself out for dead.”— At these words I rose up and quitted the room, without making any answer.

This unfeeling disdain inspired me with the most lively indignation, and for a moment I was inspired with a desire of revenge altogether foreign to my character. These emotions subsided ; but the conviction that no one felt interested in my happiness, broke the bonds which attached me to the house in which I had beheld my father. It is certain that I did not like Lady Edgermond ; but I felt for her nothing like the indifference she manifested towards me ; I was touched with her tenderness for her daughter, and hoped to have interested her by the care I bestowed upon this child, whilst on the contrary, perhaps, this very

care had excited her jealousy; for the more sacrifices she imposed upon herself in other respects, the more passionate she was in the only affection in which she indulged. Every thing in the human heart, that is lively and ardent, under the control of reason, in every other relation was found in her character with respect to her daughter.

In the midst of the resentment which the conversation with Lady Edgermond had excited in my heart, Theresa came to tell me, with extreme emotion, that a vessel was arrived from Leghorn in a port not many leagues distant; and that there were on board this vessel, merchants whom she knew, and who were the most polite people in the world.—“They are all Italians,” said she, weeping, “they speak nothing but Italian,” In eight days they are to reembark, and proceed directly to Italy, if my Lady were deter-

mined.”— “Return with them, my good Theresa.” answered I,— “No, madam : cried she, “I had rather die here.”—And she quitted my room, where I remained reflecting upon my duty towards my mother-in-law. It appeared to me quite clear that she desired to have me no longer in her family ; my influence upon Lucilia was displeasing to her ; she feared that my reputation in the neighbourhood for an extraordinary female, would one day injure the establishment of her daughter ; in effect, she had told the secret of her heart in indicating to me a desire that I might pass for dead ; and this bitter counsel, at which my heart had so much revolted, appeared to me upon reflection, reasonable enough.

“Yes,” cried I, “undoubtedly, let me pass for dead in a scene, where my existence is only a disturbed sleep. I shall be born again at the call of nature, of the

sun, and of the fine arts ; whilst the cold sepulchral marble, inscribed with my name can very well supply my place in this lifeless retreat. These flights of my soul after liberty, did not yet inspire me with sufficient strength to form a decisive resolution ; there are moments when we believe ourselves possessed of power sufficient to accomplish the object of our desire, and others, when we think that the common order of things ought to rule every sentiment of the mind. I was in this state of indecision, which might perhaps have lasted for ever, since no external circumstance induced me to form a determination, when on the Sunday which followed my conversation with Lady Edgermond, I heard, towards the evening, some Italian singers under my window, who had come over in the vessel from Leghorn, and whom Theresa had brought thither to cause me an agreeable surprise. I cannot ex-

press the emotion which I felt ; a deluge of tears covered my face—all my recollections were revived—Nothing reminds us of the past like music ; it more than reminds us, it invokes, and the past appears like the spirits of those who are dear to us, clad in a mysterious and melancholy veil. The minstrels sang those delicious words of Monti, which he composed in his exile :

Bella Itallia, amate sponde
Pur vi torno à riveder.
Trema in petto e se confonde
L'Alma oppressa dal piacer.

“ Sweet Italy ! dear shores ! I am then about to visit you again ; my trembling soul faints with the excess of pleasure ! ”

I was in a kind of delirium, I felt for Italy all that love can inspire, desire, enthusiasm, and regret. I was no longer mistress of myself, my whole soul was transported

towards my native country: I wanted to see it, to breathe its air, to hear its harmony, every pulse of my heart called me to my lovely country! If life were offered to the silent inhabitants of the tomb they would not lift up the stone that covered them with more impatience than I felt to remove the shroud that enveloped me, and enter the realms of imagination, of genius, and of nature! In this moment of elevation, caused by the music, I was yet far from forming any decided resolution; for my sentiments were too confused to admit of any fixed idea, when my mother-in-law entered, and desired me to put a stop to this minstrelsy, because, it was scandalous, she said, to hear music on a Sunday. I represented that the Italians were to quit the country on the next day, and that it was six years since I had enjoyed a similar pleasure,

but all in vain. Lady Edgermond would not hear me ; and observing, that before all things, the customs of the country in which we live ought to be respected, she approached the window, and desired her servants to drive away my poor countrymen. They departed, and sang to me at increased distances, an adieu, which pierced my heart.

The measure of my disgust was now full—the vessel was to sail on the morrow—Theresa, taking all chances, had prepared every thing for my departure, without informing me of it. Lucilia had been for a week back with a relation of her mother's—this spot contained not the ashes of my father, as they had been deposited by his order, near his estate in Scotland. To conclude, I departed, without informing Lady Edgermond, except by a letter, which I left for her perusal. I departed

in one of those moments when we abandon ourselves to a destiny in which every thing appears better than servitude, disgust, and insipidity: when inconsiderate youth trusts to the future, and contemplates it like a star in the skies which promises a happy fate.

CHAP. IV.

MORE uneasy thoughts took possession of me when I lost sight of the coast of England; but as I had left behind me no violent attachment, I was soon consoled in arriving at Leghorn, by the charming aspect of Italy. Agreeably to the promise I had given Lady Edgermond, I made no person acquainted with my real name; I only assumed that of Corinna, which I loved, from having read the history of a Grecian woman of that name, a poetess, and friend of Pindar. My figure was so altered in my growth, that I was certain of not

being known. I had lived a very solitary life at Florence, and, therefore, had reason to reckon as it has turned out, that no person at Rome would be able to discover who I was. Lady Edgermond, soon informed me, that she had caused to be reported, that the physicians had prescribed my journey to Italy, and that I had died on my passage. Besides this, her letter contained not a single observation; she conveyed to me, with the greatest exactitude, the whole of my fortune, which is pretty considerable; but she has never written to me since. Five years have glided away from that epoch to the moment when I first beheld you; five years, during which I have drank deeply of the cup of happiness. I settled at Rome, my reputation increased; literature and the fine arts, have even afforded me more solitary enjoyment than public fame, and it remained for you to teach me the empire of sentiment.

My imagination occasionally coloured and discoloured my illusions ; but I had not yet known an affection that could govern me. Admiration, respect, and love, had not chained all the faculties of my soul : I conceived that the tender passion I have mentioned, contained more charms than I have found in it ; in a word, I was superior to my own impressions instead of being entirely subjugated by them.

Do not force me to relate, how two men, whose passion for me, has but too strongly manifested itself, successively occupied my life, before I knew you : I should do violence, now, to my own intimate conviction, were I to persuade myself that any other object than Oswald could have truly interested me.—I feel, on this subject, as much repentance as grief. I will simply tell what you have already learnt from my friends—that, my independant existence was so pleasing to me, that after

long irresolution, and many painful scenes, I have twice broken those engagements which the necessity of love to the human heart, had made me contract, and which I could not resolve to render irrevocable. A German Lord, wished to take me as his bride, to that country in which his rank and fortune fixed him. An Italian Prince, offered me a more brilliant establishment even in Rome. The first found favour in inspiring me with the highest esteem ; but I perceived in time that his mental resources were but scanty. When we were alone, I was obliged to take a great deal of trouble to support the conversation and conceal from him his deficiency. I dared not, in my discourse with this suitor, shew myself what I can be, for fear of making him uncomfortable; I foresaw that his predilection for me would necessarily diminish on that day, when I should cease to manage him thus,

and it is difficult to cherish enthusiasm for those whose attachment we are obliged to preserve in this manner. The attentions of a woman to inferiority of any kind in a man, suppose always more pity than love; and that kind of premeditation and reflection which these sort of attentions demand, wither the celestial nature of an involuntary sentiment. The Italian Prince was full of grace, and fecundity of mind. It was his intention to settle at Rome; he possessed a similarity of taste with myself, and loved my manner of life; but I remarked, upon an important occasion, that he wanted energy of soul, and that in difficult circumstances of life, it would be me who would find myself obliged to support and strengthen him. Upon that discovery, love was at an end; for women have need of support, and nothing cools their affection so much as the necessity of giving it. I was therefore twice undeceived as to my

sentiments, not by misfortunes or errors, but by an observant mind, which discovered to me what imagination had concealed.

I believed myself destined never to love with all the energies of my soul; sometimes this idea was painful to me; but more frequently I was charmed at the prospect of liberty. I dreaded in myself that faculty of suffering, that passionate nature which menaces my happiness and my life; I took confidence in the belief that none would ever be able to answer the idea I had formed of the mind and character of a man; I hoped to escape the despotism of an absolute attachment, by perceiving some defects in the object who might please me. I knew not then that there are defects which can increase love, even by the uneasiness which they cause. Oswald, your melancholy, the uncertainty and severity of your opinions, disturb my

repose without diminishing my affection; I often think that this affection will not render me happy; but then it is myself and not you, that I judge.

You are now acquainted with my history, my abandonment of England, my change of name, and the inconstancy of my heart.—I have dissimulated nothing. Undoubtedly, you will think that imagination has often led me astray; but if society did not confine women by bonds of every kind, from which men are free, what would there be in my life to render me unworthy of being beloved? Have I ever been guilty of deception? Have I ever injured any one? Has my soul ever been contaminated with vulgar interests? Will God require more of the orphan, who is left alone in the world, than sincerity, goodness of heart, and decent pride; happy are the women who at their first entrance into life, meet with the man

whom they are destined to love ! But am I less worthy of his attachment, because I have known him too late ?

However, I will tell you, my Lord, and you will believe my frankness : If I could pass my life in your company, without espousing you, notwithstanding the loss of a great felicity, and an honour in my eyes the first of all, I would not desire an union. Perhaps this marriage would be a sacrifice; perhaps, one day, you will regret my beautiful sister Lucilia, whom your father destined for your bride. She is younger than I by twelve years ; her name as spotless as the first flower of spring. In England, it would be necessary to revive mine, which has already been consigned to the tomb. Lucilia has, to my knowledge, a pure and gentle soul, and if I may judge by her infancy, her judgment will not be wholly unconcerned in her love for you. Oswald, you are free ;

your ring shall be returned to you, whenever you desire it.

Perhaps you would wish to know, before you form a decision, what I should suffer in the event of your leaving me? That is what I know not myself; sometimes my soul is a prey to tumultuous emotions, which are stronger than my reason, and I should not be guilty, if such emotions were to render my existence altogether insupportable. It is equally true, that I am very susceptible of happiness; I sometimes feel a fever of thought which gives a quicker circulation to my blood. I feel an interest in every thing; I speak with pleasure; I enjoy with delight the refined conversation of others, the interest they manifest for me, the wonders of nature, and the works of art, which affectation has not struck dead. But would it be in my power to live when I should no longer behold you? It is for you to judge

of that Oswald ; for you know me better than I do myself ; I am not responsible for my feelings ; it is for him who plunges the dagger in my bosom, to know whether the wound he inflicts is mortal. But though it should be so, Oswald, I ought to pardon you !

My happiness entirely depends upon the sentiment you have testified for me during these six months past. I could defy all the power of your will and your delicacy to deceive me as to the slightest alteration in this sentiment. Remove from your mind every idea of duty in this respect ; in love I depend neither upon promise or pledge. Only the deity can revive the flower which has been withered in the blast. An accent, a look from you, would be sufficient to convince me that your heart was no longer the same ; and mine would detest all that you could offer me in place of your love, of that divine ray

which forms my celestial aureolus. Be you then now free, Oswald, free every day of your life, free though you were my husband ; for, if you no longer loved me, I would emancipate you, by my death, from the indissoluble bonds which bound you to me.

When you shall have read this letter I will see you again ; my impatience will conduct me to you, and your first glance will inform me of my fate ; for misfortune is rapid, and the heart, feeble as it is, cannot mistake the signs of an irrevocable destiny. Adieu !

BOOK XV.



*The Farewell to Rome, and the Journey
to Venice.*

CHAPTER I.

It was with deep emotion that Oswald had read the letter of Corinna. He was agitated by a confused medley of various pain: at one time, he was hurt at the picture drawn by Corinna of an English province, and said to himself, in despair, that such a woman could never be happy in domestic life; then again, he pitied her

for what she had suffered, and could not help admiring the simplicity with which she related it. He also felt jealous of the two attachments she had felt before he knew her, and the more he wished to conceal this jealousy from himself, the more he was tormented by it; but, above all, the part which his father had in this history bitterly afflicted him, and the anguish of his soul was such, that he no longer knew either what he said or what he did. He quitted his house, precipitately, at noon, beneath a burning sun; at this hour there is nobody in the streets of Naples: fear of the heat confines every living being under shelter. He went towards Portici, walking at random, and without taking any particular direction, while the burning rays, which fell upon his head, at once excited and disturbed his thoughts.

Corinna, in the mean time, after some hours of expectation, could not resist the

necessity she felt of seeing Oswald ; she entered his room, and not finding him there, his absence, at this moment, inspired her with a deadly terror. She beheld her written narration on the table of Lord Nelville, and not doubting that it was after having read it that he was gone away, she imagined he had quitted her entirely, and that she should never behold him again. Then an insupportable grief seized upon her heart ; she tried to compose herself in waiting for his return, but every moment of expectation pierced her heart ; she traversed her chamber hastily, and then stopped of a sudden, for fear that she might lose the least noise which should announce his arrival. At last, no longer able to resist her anxiety, she went down stairs to ask if any one had seen Lord Nelville go out, and which way he had directed his steps. The master of the hotel answered, that he was gone towards

Portici; “but surely,” added he, “he cannot have proceeded far; for at this moment a stroke of the sun might be very dangerous.” This fear, uniting to every other, Corinna, although she had nothing upon her head to defend her from the heat of day, set out, in search of Oswald. The large white pavement of Naples, composed of lava, and placed there as if to multiply the effect of the heat, burned her feet, and dazzled her by the reflection of the sun beams.

She did not intend to go as far as Portici, but she continued to advance faster and faster;—pain and suffering quickened her steps; no person was seen in the high way: at this hour even the animals remain concealed.

A terrible dust filled the air, when the least breath of wind blew, or the lightest carriage passed the road: the meadows, covered with this dust, no longer recalled

by their colour, vegetation, and life. Every minute Corinna felt ready to drop; she did not meet a single tree to support her, and her reason was affected in this burning desert: she had not many steps to take, in order to arrive at the king's palace, under the porticos of which she would find the refreshment of shade and water; but her strength failed her; she in vain essayed to walk, she could no longer see her way; and her head was seized with a vertigo, which presented to her a thousand lights, still more livid than that of day; and, on a sudden, a cloud succeeded to these lights, which surrounded her with darkness. A burning thirst consumed her; she met a lazzaroni, the only creature who could at this moment brave the force of the climate, and she besought him to go and fetch her a little water; but this man perceiving on the public road, at this hour, a woman so distinguished by her beauty,

and the elegance of her clothes, did not doubt that she was mad, and ran from her in affright.

Happily Oswald was at this instant on his return, when the accents of Corinna smote his ear at a distance ; he ran almost beside himself, received her in his arms, as she fell senseless, and carried her to the portico of the palace, where he recalled her to life by his tenderness and his cares.

As soon as she recognised him, she said, still distracted :—“ You promised not to leave me without my consent ; I may appear unworthy of your affection ; but why do you despise your promise ? ” “ Corinna,” replied Oswald, “ the idea of leaving you, never once approached my heart ; I only wished to reflect on our destiny, and compose my spirits, before I saw you again.” “ Well, then,” said Corinna, “ You have had time, during those deadly hours,

which have nearly cost me my life; speak then, and tell me what you have determined upon." Oswald, terrified at the sound of Corinna's voice, which betrayed her internal emotion, knelt before her, and said: "Corinna, the heart of thy friend is not altered; what have I learnt that ought to render me less enchanted with thee? But listen"—and as she trembled more violently at this word, he replied, earnestly:—"Listen, without fear, to him who could not live, and know you to be unhappy." "Ah!" cried Corinna, "It is of my happiness that you speak; then you no longer talk of your own. I will not repel your pity at this moment, for I have need of it; but do think that will be my only dependance?" "No; love will be the support of both our lives," said Oswald, "I will return"—"You will return;" interrupted Corinna, "Ah! you are then about to leave me! What has

happened? what has altered you since yesterday? Wretch that I am!"—"My dear love, do not thus torment thy heart," replied Oswald, "and let me disclose to you, if I can, what my feelings are—it is much less than you think;" but, said he, summoning all his resolution "I must know what my father's reasons were for opposing our union seven years ago; he never spoke to me about it—I am quite ignorant on the subject; but his most intimate friend, who is still living in England, will be able to tell me what his motives were. If, as I believe, they were only caused by trifling circumstances, I shall consider them as nothing; I will pardon your having quitted the country of your father and of mine, I will hope that love may bind you to it, and that you will prefer domestic happiness to even the lustre of your genius. I will hope everything, I will do everything; but if my father,

Corinna; has pronounced against you, I will never become the spouse of another; but never also can I be thine.”—

When he had spoken these words, a cold sweat bedewed the forehead of Oswald, the effort which he had made to speak thus, was such, that Corinna only thinking of the state in which she beheld him, was some time without making any answer and taking his hand, she said to him :—
“ What, you are about to depart, you are going to England without me?”—Oswald was silent.—“ Cruel man,” cried Corinna, in despair, “ you make no answer, you do not contradict what I say; Ah! is it then true!”

“ I have recovered, thanks to your cares,” replied Oswald, “ that life which I was on the point of losing; that life, which, during the war, belongs to my country. If I may be united to you, we

will never part again, and I will restore you to your existence and your good name in England. If this too happy destiny be forbidden me, I shall, when peace is made, return to Italy; I shall be blessed with your society, and shall make no alteration in your condition, except by giving you a faithful friend.”—“ Ah! you will make no alteration in my fate,” said Corinna, “ when you are become my only interest in this world, when I have tasted of that intoxicating cup which brings happiness or death! But at least tell me, when your departure will take place? How many days are yet left me?”—“ My dear love,” said Oswald, pressing her to his heart, “ I swear that I will not leave you in less than three months, and, perhaps, even then—” “ Three months!” said Corinna, “ shall I then be permitted to live all that time—’tis more than I expected. Come,

I feel better—three months is an eternity of happiness,” said she, with a mixture of sadness and joy, which deeply affected Oswald. Both, then, silently mounted the carriage, which conducted them to Naples.

CHAP. II.

ON their arrival at the hotel, they found the Prince Castel-Forte, who was waiting their return. It had been reported that Lord Nelville was united to Corinna, and though this news gave the Prince considerable uneasiness, he was come to ascertain the truth of the report, and to secure himself in some manner, the society of his fair friend, if even she should be forever tied to another. The melancholy of Corinna, the state of dejection, in which, for the first time, he beheld her, gave him infinite pain ; but he dared not interro-

gate her, because she seemed to avoid all conversation on the subject. | There are situations of the soul, in which we dread to confide our internal feelings to any person ; one word that we should say or hear, might be sufficient to dissipate that illusion which renders life supportable ; and the illusion of impassioned sentiments has this peculiar characteristic ; that we use those delicate precautions towards ourselves, which we should observe towards a friend whom we were afraid to afflict by an eclaircissement, and that without perceiving it, we put our own grief under the protection of our own pity.

The next day, Corinna, who was of all females in the world, the most ingenuous, and who never sought to produce an interest by her grief, essayed to appear gay, and recover her animation ; thinking that the best way to retain Oswald, was to appear engaging as formerly , she began,

therefore, with vivacity, an interesting subject of conversation ; then all of a sudden, she became absent, and her looks wandered without any fixed object. She, who possessed in the highest degree the facility of speech, hesitated in the choice of words, and sometimes she made use of an expression which had not the least affinity with what she wished to say. Then she laughed at herself ; but in the midst of this laughter, her eyes were filled with tears. Oswald was extremely afflicted at the pain which he caused her ; he wished to find an opportunity of conversing with her alone, but she carefully avoided it.

“ What would you know of me ? ” said she to him, one day when he insisted on speaking to her, “ I lament my fate, that is all : I felt some pride in my talents ; I aspired to fame, and the suffrages even of those indifferent to me, were the objects of my ambition ; but, at present, I care for

nothing, and it is not happiness which has detached me from these vain pleasures ; but a profound depression. I do not accuse you of this—it is my own fault—perhaps I shall triumph over it ! So many things pass at the bottom of the soul, which we can neither foresee nor direct ; but I must do you justice, Oswald, you suffer from my pain, I see you do—I also pity you—why should not this sentiment suit us both ? Alas ? it might be extended to all that breathe without committing many errors.”

Oswald was not then less unhappy than Corinna—he tenderly loved her ; but her history had given him pain, from its account of her manner of feeling, and of her affections ; he thought he saw clearly that his father had foreseen all, that he had judged of every thing for him beforehand, and that he should despise the warnings of his parent in espousing Corinna ; how-

ever, he could not renounce the hope of that event, and found himself replunged in that uncertainty which he had thought would be removed when he became acquainted with the destiny of his fair friend. She, on her side, had not always wished for the bond of marriage to unite her to Oswald; and, if she had believed herself certain that he would never quit her, she would need nothing more to make her happy; but she knew him sufficiently to be convinced that he could not know felicity out of domestic life, and that he never could abjure his design of marrying her, but by loving her less. The departure of Oswald for England, appeared to her like the signal of her death; she knew what influence the manners and opinions of that country had upon him; vainly would he form the project of passing his life with her in Italy: she did not doubt, that when returned to his native country,

the idea of quitting it a second time would appear odious to him. In effect, she felt that all her power over him proceeded from her mental and personal charms, and what would that power be in absence? What are the recollections of the imagination when they are deprived of their substance by the force and reality of a social order, the more commanding, because it is founded upon pure and noble ideas?

Corinna, tormented by these reflections, could have wished to exercise some empire over her sentiment for Oswald. She endeavoured to discourse with the Prince Castel-Forte, on those objects which had always interested her—literature and the fine arts; but, when Oswald entered the room, the dignity of his carriage, and his melancholy look, which seemed to say to her: “Why would you renounce me?” destroyed all her projects. Twenty times

Corinna wished to tell Lord Nelville that his irresolution offended her, and that she was determined to leave him; but when she saw him leaning his head on his hand, like a man borne down with painful thought, when she observed him breathe with difficulty, or saw him wander pensively on the sea shore, lifting up his eyes to Heaven, when those harmonious sounds were heard, whose music he had only known from her, all her efforts were in a moment upset. The accent, the physiognomy, a certain grace in every gesture reveals to love the most intimate secrets of the soul; and perhaps, it is true, that a character apparently cold, like that of Nelville, could only be penetrated by her who loved him: Impartiality, conjecturing nothing, can only judge from what is seen. Corinna, in the silence of reflection, tried what she had practised with so much success in her former attachments; she called to her aid

CORINNA.

that observant mind, which could discover with so much sagacity the least weaknesses ; she endeavoured to excite her imagination to represent Oswald to her with features less captivating ; but there was nothing in him which was not noble, affecting, and simple, and how could she destroy, in her own sight, the charm of a character perfectly natural ! only affectation can produce those sudden alarms upon the heart, which cause it to awake, astonished at having loved.

There existed, besides, between Oswald and Corinna, a singular and all-powerful sympathy ; their tastes were not the same, their observations rarely accorded, and, nevertheless, there was at the bottom of their soul similar mysteries, emotions drawn from the same source, in fact, a secret indescribable resemblance, which supposed one same nature, though exterior circumstances had differently modified

CORINNA.

c. Corinna perceived then, and it was with affright, that she had still augmented her passion for Oswald, in observing her anew, in judging his character in detail, in struggling warmly against the impression he made on her.

She proposed to the Prince Castel-Forte to return to Rome with them ; and Lord Nelville perceived that this was with a view to avoid being alone with him—he was afflicted at it ; but he did not oppose it.—He no longer knew whether it would be in his power to make Corinna happy, and this thought rendered him timid. Corinna, however, could have wished him to object to the Prince Castel-Forte as a travelling companion ; but she did not tell him so. There was no longer the same simplicity in their actions as before ; they had not hitherto used dissimulation ; but now Corinna proposed what she could have wished Oswald to refuse, and thus

was disturbed, an affection which, during six months had each day conferred on them a happiness almost unmixed.

In returning by Capua and Gaëta, in beholding again those same places, which she had traversed a little time before with so much delight, Corinna felt a bitter recollection. The beautiful aspect of nature, which seemed to call upon every mortal to be happy, only redoubled her sadness. When the smiling face of Heaven does not dissipate grief, it increases its sufferings by the contrast. They arrived in the evening at Terracina, the air was delightfully fresh, and the same sea dashed its waves against the same rock. After supper Corinna disappeared---Oswald, not finding her return, quitted the house with disquietude; and his heart, like that of Corinna, guided him to the spot where they had reposed on their way to Naples. He perceived Corinna, at a distance,

kneeling before the rock on which they sat, and beholding the moon, he saw that it was covered with a cloud, as it had been two months ago, at the same hour. Corinna, at the approach of Oswald, rose up, and said to him:—"Was I in the right to believe in presages? Is there not compassion for me in Heaven? It warned me of the future; and now you see that it is in mourning for me. Do not forget, Oswald, to remark, whether this same cloud will not pass before the moon when I die."—"Corinna! Corinna!" cried Lord Nelville, "have I deserved that you should destroy me with grief? You may easily do it, I assure you; talk once more in this manner, and you will behold me fall lifeless at your feet. What is my crime? You are independant of public opinion by your manner of thinking; you live in a country where that opinion is never severe, and though it should be so,

your genius triumphs over it. Whatever may happen I am determined to pass my days with you.—Yes; I am determined—What is it then afflicts you? If I could not be your husband without offending the memory of him who divides my soul with you, would you love me sufficiently to feel happy in my devoting to you every instant of my life?” “Oswald,” said Corinna, “if I believed that we should never part, I should wish for nothing more; but”——“Do you not possess the secret pledge of the ring?”——“I will return it to you,” replied she: “No, never,” said he. “Ah!” continued she, “I will return it to you, whenever you desire it; and should you cease to love me, even this ring will inform me of it. Does not an ancient belief teach us that the diamond is more faithful than man, and that it becomes tarnished when he who has given it betrays us?” (4) “Co-

rinna ;” said Oswald, “ is your mind perturbed, do you no longer know me, that thus you talk of treason?” “ Forgive me, Oswald, forgive me!” cried Corinna, “ but when filled by a deeply-rooted passion, the heart is sometimes endowed with a miraculous instinct, and our sufferings become oracles. What signify those throbs of grief with which my heart is bursting? Ah! my love, I should not dread this emotion, did I not know it to be the harbinger of death!”

In finishing these words, Corinna, arose, and departed precipitately—she feared to converse too long with Oswald—she did not take pleasure in grief, and sought to destroy the impressions of sadness; but when repulsed by her, they only returned with new violence. On the next day, when they traversed the Pontine marshes, the attentions of Oswald were more tender than the first time; she

received them with sweetness and gratitude: but there was something in her look which said: “ *Why do you not suffer me to die?*”

CHAP. III.

How desert does Rome appear on returning to it from Naples! You enter by the gate of St. John of Lateran; you traverse long solitary streets; the noise of Naples, its population, and the vivacity of its inhabitants, being still in your mind, makes Rome appear singularly dull. It becomes pleasing again, after an abode of some time; but when we are accustomed to a life of external distraction, we always feel a melancholy sensation, on entering into ourselves again, whatever may be our internal state of mind. Besides, liv-

ing at Rome, at this season of the year (it was about the end of July) is very dangerous. The noxious air renders several districts uninhabitable, and the contagion often extends itself over the whole city. This year, particularly, the alarm was greater than ordinary, and every countenance bore the stamp of secret terror.

On arriving at the capital, Corinna found at the threshold of her door, a monk, who asked permission to bless her house, in order to preserve it from the contagion—Corinna consented, and the priest went over all the apartments, sprinkling them with holy water, and pronouncing some Latin prayers in the middle of each. Lord Nelville smiled a little at this ceremony—Corinna was deeply affected with it—“I find,” said she to him, “an indefinite charm in every thing that is religious, I would even say superstitious, when it contains nothing hostile nor intolerant: the

divine aid is so necessary when our thoughts and sentiments are out of the circle of common life! Distinguished minds stand particularly in need of supernatural protection.”—“Undoubtedly, this necessity exists,” replied Lord Nelville, “but is it in this manner that it can be satisfied;” “I never refuse the association of a prayer with mine, from whomsoever offered,”—answered Corinna, “you are in the right,” said Lord Nelville, “and he gave his offering for the poor, to the old and timid priest, who went away blessing them both.

As soon as Corinna’s friends knew that she was arrived, they hastened to visit her. None expressed their astonishment that she had returned without being the wife of Lord Nelville; none enquired the circumstances which had impeded their union; the pleasure of seeing her was so great that it effaced every other idea. Corinna, endeavoured to appear herself; but

in vain— she went to contemplate the chefs-d'œuvre of art, which had formerly caused her so lively a pleasure ; but grief was at the bottom of all her feelings. She walked sometimes to the Borghese villa, sometimes to the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and the aspect of those places, which she once loved so much, wounded her soul— she no longer felt that gentle reverie, which, in impressing her with the instability of every enjoyment, made them still more enticing. A fixed and painful thought occupied her ; nature, whose voice is always indefinite, conveys no consolation to the soul, when it is governed by positive unhappiness.

In the intercourse between Corinna and Oswald there was a constraint which was quite painful—it was not misfortune ; for, in the profound emotions which that causes, it sometimes relieves the oppressed heart, and causes a lightning to burst from

the storm, which can reveal every thing ; it was a reciprocal embarrassment—vain attempts to escape circumstances which weighed them both down, and made them a little dissatisfied with each other : can we suffer without accusing the object of our love as the cause ? Would not a look, an accent, be sufficient to efface it. But this look, this accent, does not come when it is expected ; it does not come when it is necessary. Nothing in love has a motive : it appears to be a divine power, which thinks and feels within us, without our being able to influence it.

A contagious distemper, such as had not been seen for a long time before, suddenly broke out at Rome ; a young woman was seized with it, and perished, together with her friends and family, who could not be prevailed upon to leave her—the adjoining house experienced the same fate—every hour the confraternity, clad

in white, with their faces covered, who accompany the dead to the church, were seen in the streets ; one would say that the deceased were being conveyed from the world by spirits. The corpse is placed on a sort of litter ; they only throw over the feet, yellow or red satin, and the children often amuse themselves in playing with the icy hands of the departed. This spectacle, at once terrible and familiar, is accompanied by the doleful and monotonous murmur of some psalms :—a music without modulation, in which the accent of the human heart is no longer felt.

One evening when Lord Nelville and Corinna were alone together, while he was pained at the constraint which he perceived in Corinna, he heard beneath his window those slow and lengthened sounds, which announced a funeral ceremony :—he listened to them, sometime, in silence, and then said to Corinna :—

“ Perhaps, to-morrow, I shall also be seized with this distemper, against which there is no security ; and you will regret not having spoken a few tender words to your Oswald, on that day, which might have been his last. Corinna, death threatens us nearly ; are not the evils of nature sufficient ? Why should we increase the miseries of our situation by mutually rending each other’s hearts ?”—Corinna was immediately struck with an idea of the danger to which Oswald was exposed in the midst of the contagion, and she besought him to leave Rome. He refused in the most decided manner ; then she proposed that they should both go to Venice together, to which he joyfully consented ; for he trembled for Corinna, observing the contagion every day become more formidable.

Their departure was fixed for the next day but one, Lord Nelville, not having seen Corinna the preceding day, because

an English gentleman of his acquaintance, who was about to leave Rome, had detained him, she wrote to him that sudden and indispensable business obliged her to set out immediately for Florence, and that she would join him in a fortnight at Venice ; she besought him to pass through Ancona, for which city she gave him a commission that seemed important ; the style of the letter was sensible and calm, and since they had left Naples, Oswald had not found the language of Corinna so serene and tender. He believed in the contents of this letter, and prepared to depart, when he felt a desire to see Corinna's house before he left Rome. He goes thither, finds it locked—knocks at the door—the old housekeeper tells him that all her mistress' servants are gone with her, and does not satisfy him with a single word in answer to all his questions. He goes to the Prince Castel-Forte, who knows nothing

of Corinna, and is extremely surprised that she should depart without letting him know it.— Lord Nelville was alarmed, and determined to go to Tivoli to see Corinna's steward, who lived there, and who must have received some orders from her.

He mounted his horse, and with an extraordinary effort, urged by the agitation of his mind, he arrived at Corinna's house—all the doors were open—he enters, and after passing several rooms, without seeing any body, penetrates at length to that of Corinna, and through the darkness which reigned in it, beheld Corinna stretched on her bed, and Theresa alone by her side.—He gave a cry—his voice brings Corinna to herself—she perceives him, and rising up, she says to him:—"Do not approach me—I forbid it you—if you come near me, I shall die!"—A gloomy fear seized upon Oswald, he thought that Corinna, accused him of some concealed

crime of which she fancied she had made a sudden discovery ; he imagined that he was hated and despised, and falling on his knees, he expressed this fear with a despair and a dejection, which suddenly suggested to Corinna the idea of profiting by his error, and she commanded him to quit her sight for ever, as if what he suspected had been just.

Thunderstruck and indignant, he was about to depart, he was about to leave Corinna, when Theresa cried out :—“ Ah ! my Lord, will you abandon my dear mistress ? She has driven every body away from her, and will hardly let me wait upon her, because she has the contagious distemper !”—At these words, which immediately unfolded the affecting stratagem of Corinna, Oswald threw himself into her arms with a tenderness and transport which he had never felt before. In

vain did Corinna repulse him, in vain she expressed her anger at Theresa ; Oswald, imperiously desired Theresa to leave the room, and then pressed Corinna to his heart, covering her with tears and caresses ;—“ No,” cried he, “ thou shalt not die without me, and if the fatal poison flow in thy veins, at least, thank Heaven I have inhaled it from thy lips.”—“ Cruel Oswald,” said Corinna, “ to what a torment thou hast condemned me ! O God ! since I cannot remove him from my presence, let not this angel perish with me ! No, you will not permit it !” In finishing these words, Corinna’s strength forsook her. During eight days she was in the most imminent danger. In the midst of her delirium, she incessantly repeated :—*“ Take Oswald from me—don’t let him approach me ! Don’t tell him where I am !”* When she came to herself, and knew him

again, she said to him, "Oswald! you are there—in death then, as in life, we shall be united." And when she beheld his paleness, a mortal terror seized her, and she called to the aid of Lord Nelville those physicians who had given a rare proof of their devotion in not leaving her.

Oswald continually held the burning hands of Corinna between his; he always finished the cup of which she had drank; in short, such was the avidity with which he sought to share the danger of his mistress, that she herself had given over her opposition to his passionate self-devotion, and letting her head fall on Nelville's arm, she resigned her will to his. Two beings, who could love so as to refuse life without each other, must have arrived at the most sublime perfection of disinterested affection, which the soul is capable of on earth (5). Happily Lord Nelville

did not take the disease. Corinna recovered, but penetrated more deeply than ever with another malady. The generosity of her lover redoubled her attachment.

CHAP. IV.

It was then determined that to avoid the noxious air of Rome, Corinna and Lord Nelville should go to Venice together. They resumed their habitual silence upon future projects ; but they discoursed of their passion with more tenderness than ever, and Corinna avoided, as carefully as Lord Nelville, that subject which disturbed the delightful calm of their mutual intercourse. A day passed with him, was such an enjoyment ; he seemed to receive so much pleasure from her conversation ; he studied her least desires with so con-

stant and uniform an interest, that it seemed impossible he could exist otherwise, or be able to confer so much felicity without being himself happy. Corinna drew her security from the very happiness which she herself enjoyed. We finish, by believing, after some months passed in such a state that it is inseparable from our existence. The agitation of Corinna was then tranquillized anew, and again her want of foresight came to her aid.

However, on the eve of quitting Rome, she experienced considerable melancholy. She now feared, and desired that it might be for ever. On the night which preceded the day fixed for her departure, being unable to sleep, she heard a company of Roman men and women pass under her windows, who were walking by moon-light and singing. She could not resist the desire she felt once more to traverse, in this manner, her native city : she dressed her-

self, and desiring her carriage and servants to follow her at a distance, as well as covering herself with a veil to prevent her being known, she, keeping a few paces behind, joined this company, which had stopped on the bridge of St. Angelo, opposite the mausoleum of Adrian. One would have said, that in this spot, music expressed the vanity of all the splendors of this world. The imagination might picture to itself the great spirit of Adrian hovering in the air, and astonished at no longer finding upon earth any other mark of his glory than a tomb. The company continued their route, charming the silent hour, when the happy repose, with their song. This sweet music, seemed destined to console those who suffered. Corinna followed it, hurried away by that irresistible charm of melody which removes the sense of fatigue.

The minstrels stopped before the pillar

of Antoninus, and that of Trajan; they then saluted the obelisk of St. John of Lateran; the ideal language of music was suited to the ideal expression of the monuments. Enthusiasm reigned alone in the city, whilst every vulgar interest was asleep. At length the band of minstrels retired, and left Corinna alone near the Coliseum. She entered its enclosure to bid adieu to ancient Rome. We cannot feel the impression which the Coliseum is calculated to inspire, if we have only seen it by day, the brilliancy of an Italian sun gives an air of rejoicing to every scene—the moon is the lamp that should light us to the ruins. Sometimes, through the openings of the amphitheatre, which seems to lift its head to the clouds, the vault of heaven appears like a dark blue curtain placed behind the edifice. The plants, which cling to the mouldering walls, and grow in the solitary places, are cloathed in the

colours of night—a cold shivering seizes the soul, though at the same time it is softened to receive the most tender impression.

One side of the edifice is much more decayed than the other; thus two contemporaries struggle unequally against time, who knocks down the weakest, whilst the other resists at first, but falls soon after. “Solemn scenes,” cried Corinna, “where in this moment no living being accompanies me, where I am answered alone by my own voice! Are not the storms of passion appeased by the calm of nature, which lets generations pass so tranquilly before her? Has not the universe some other aim than man, and are all these wonders here only to excite reflection in the soul? Oswald! why do I love you with so much idolatry? Why do we abandon ourselves to these ephemeral sentiments; ephemeral, in comparison with those infinite hopes

which unite us to the deity? O, my God, if it be true, that we admire you so much the more as we are the more capable of reflection, enable me to find an asylum in my mind against the torments of the heart. Is not this noble friend, whose looks can never be effaced from my heart, a fleeting being like myself! But there is among the stars an eternal love, which can alone suffice for the immensity of our wishes."—Corinna remained a long time plunged in reverie; at length she moved homewards with a slow and pensive step.

But before she returned to her abode, she resolved to visit St. Peter's, in order to wait till day-break, ascend the cupola, and from this eminence bid adieu to the city of Rome. In approaching St. Peter's, her first thought was to represent to herself this edifice, when it should, one day, in its turn, become a ruin—the object of admiration for ages to come. She ima-

gined these pillars, now majestically erect, half prostrate on the earth; this portico broken, and that dome uncovered; but even then the obelisk of the Egyptians must reign over the new ruins; that people have laboured for a terrestrial eternity. At length the dawn appeared, and from the summit of St. Peter's, Corinna contemplated Rome, thrown in the uncultivated country, like an Oasis in the deserts of Lybia. Devastation surrounds it; but that multitude of steeples, cupolas, obelisks, and pillars which preside over it, whilst St. Peter's rises above them all, gives to its aspect a beauty altogether marvellous. This city, if we may so express it, possesses an individual charm. We love it as an animated being; its edifices, its ruins are friends to whom we bid adieu.

Corinna addressed her regrets to the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Castle of St. Angelo, and all those places, the sight of

which had so often renewed the pleasures of her imagination. “Adieu! thou Land of Recollections,” cried she, “adieu! thou abode, where life depends neither upon society nor events, where enthusiasm is awakened by the looks, and by the intimate union of the soul with exterior objects. I go—I am about to follow Oswald, without even knowing what fate he intends me, him whom I prefer to that independance which has afforded me so many happy days! I shall return, perhaps, my heart wounded, my soul withered, and even you, ye fine arts, ye ancient monuments; and thou sun, whom I have so often invoked in a land of clouds, in which I found myself exiled, all will then be unable to console me!”

Corinna shed tears in pronouncing this adieu, but she could not think a single instant of letting Oswald go alone. Resolutions, which proceed from the heart,

have this peculiar distinction, that in forming them we judge we blame them with severity, nevertheless, without really hesitating to form them. When passion renders itself master of a superior mind, it entirely separates the reason from the action, and to lead one astray there is no occasion to trouble the other.

The hair of Corinna, and her veil picturesquely arranged by the wind, gave to her figure so remarkable an expression, that some women, seeing her come out of the church at this hour, their Italian imagination worked it up into something miraculous, and they fell on their knees to invoke her. Corinna was moved at this simple testimony of enthusiasm, and sighed anew, at leaving a people whose impressions are so lively.

But this was not all—Corinna was put to the trial by the adieus and regrets of her friends. They invented festivals to re-

tain her some days longer ; they composed verses to repeat to her in a thousand ways that she ought not to leave them ; and when, at length, she departed, they all accompanied her on horseback to twenty miles distance from Rome. She was deeply affected. Oswald cast down his eyes in confusion, ashamed of ravishing her from so many enjoyments, and nevertheless, he knew that to propose to her to remain would have been still more cruel. He might appear selfish, in thus taking Corinna from Rome, and nevertheless he was not so, for the fear of afflicting her by going alone, had more influence upon him than even the happiness he enjoyed with her. He was undetermined as to the future—Venice was for the present the boundary of his thoughts. He had written to a friend of his father's in Scotland, to know whether his regiment would soon be put on actual service, and

he awaited his answer. Sometimes he formed the project of taking Corinna with him to England, but he immediately considered that he would ruin her reputation by taking her from her own country, without making her his wife; again, he wished, in order to soften the bitterness of a separation, to espouse her privately; but this idea was instantly rejected.—“Can we keep secrets from the dead?” said he, to himself, “What end would it answer, to make a mystery of an union which is only prevented by my respect for the will of the departed?”—In a word, he was extremely wretched. His soul, that wanted strength in all that related to feeling, was cruelly agitated by contrary affections. Corinna resigned herself to him like a victim; she felt a satisfaction, in the midst of her internal pangs, from the sacrifices which she made to him, and the generous imprudence of her heart; whilst Oswald

responsible for the fate of another, was bound every day by new ties, without knowing whether he would be allowed to submit to them : he could derive no pleasure either from love or from conscience, since it was only in their cruel conflicts that he was sensible of their power.

All the friends of Corinna, on taking leave, earnestly recommended her to the tender care of Lord Nelville. They felicitated him on being beloved by so distinguished a female, and the secret reproach contained in these felicitations, gave an additional pang to Oswald. Corinna felt it, and shortened those testimonials of friendship, sweet as they were. However, when her friends, who turned about from time to time, waving their hands, had entirely disappeared from her sight, she then said to Lord Nelville :—
“Oswald, I have now no friend but you.”—
Oh ! how did he wish that moment to be

able to swear that she should be his bride. He was on the point of doing it ; but when we have long suffered, an invincible mistrust prevents our yielding to first emotions, and every irrevocable decision makes us tremble, even when impelled to it by the heart. Corinna thought she perceived what was passing in the soul of Oswald, and, by a sentiment of delicacy, she hastened to turn the conversation upon the country through which they were passing.

CHAP. V.

It was the beginning of September—on the plain the weather was beautiful ; but when they entered the Appenines it was somewhat wintry. These high mountains often disturb the temperature of the climate, and the mildness of the air very rarely combines with the pleasure caused by the picturesque aspect of high mountains. One evening, when Corinna and Lord Nelville were both in their carriage, there arose on a sudden a terrible storm—they were surrounded by a deep obscurity, and the horses, which are so wild in these

parts, that they are obliged to yoke them by surprize, dragged them with an incredible rapidity ; they both felt a sweet sensation in being thus hurried onward together.—“ Ah !” said Lord Nelville, “ if they could conduct us far from all I know, upon earth, if they could climb these mountains, and dart into another existence, where we should find my father, who would receive and bless us ; would you be happy my love ?” and he pressed her violently against his heart. Corinna was not less affected than he, and said :—“ Do what you will with me, chain me like a slave to your fate—did not slaves formerly possess talents which charmed the life of their masters ? Take me to you for the same purpose—you will not despise her, Oswald, who has so devoted herself to you ? —Condemned by the world, you would not teach her to blush before you ?”—“ I must,” cried Lord Nelville, “ I will attain

all, or sacrifice every thing ; I must either be your husband, or expire at your feet in smothering the transports with which you inspire me. But---how sweet is the hope!---I may be able to espouse you publicly, and glory in your affection. Ah ! tell me, I conjure you, have I not lost in your regard by the conflicts that rend my heart ? Do you think yourself less beloved ?"---In saying this, his manner was so impassioned, that Corinna felt, for a moment, her confidence restored. They were both animated by the most pure and gentle sentiment.

In the meantime, the horses stopped ; Lord Nelville descended first ; he felt the cold wind which blew sharply, but which he did not feel in the carriage. He could have believed himself arrived on the coast of England ; the frozen air which he breathed no longer agreed with the beautiful climate of Italy---this air, did not,

like that of the South, counsel oblivion of every thing, save love. Oswald soon returned to his painful reflections, and Corinna, who knew the mutability of his imagination, but too easily guessed it.

The next day they arrived at our Lady of Loretto, which is placed on the top of the mountain, and whence is discovered the Adriatic. Whilst Lord Nelville was gone to give some orders for the journey, Corinna repaired to the church, where the image of the virgin is enclosed in the midst of the choir, in a little square chapel adorned with some curious bas-reliefs. The marble pavement, which surrounds this sanctuary, is worn by the pilgrims, who have walked round it upon their knees. Corinna was affected in contemplating those marks of prayer, and kneeling down on this pavement, which had been pressed by so many of the wretched, she implored the image of

goodness, the symbol of heavenly sensibility. Oswald found Corinna prostrate before this shrine, and bathed in tears. He could not comprehend how a female of such superior mind could thus follow the track of popular custom. She perceived what was passing in his mind, by his looks, and said to him :---“ Dear Oswald, does it not sometimes happen that we dare not lift our voice to the Supreme Being? How shall we confide to him all the pangs of the heart? Is it not then sweet to be able to consider a woman as the intercessor of feeble mortals: since she has lived upon this earth, she has tasted of earthly sufferings. I could beg her assistance for you with less embarrassment. Prayer addressed immediately to the Supreme Being would overwhelm me with confusion.”----“ I, nevertheless, always address my prayer directly to him,” answered Oswald.----“ I have also my in-

tercessor---the angel guardian of children is their father, and since mine has been in heaven, I have often felt in my life extraordinary succours, moments of tranquillity, without any cause, and unexpected consolations ; it is also in this miraculous protection that I place my hope of being released from my present perplexity."

" I comprehend you," said Corinna, " I believe there is no person who has not, at the bottom of his soul, some singular and mysterious idea upon his own destiny. An event which we have always dreaded without its being probable, but which nevertheless happens, and the punishment of a fault, altho' it be impossible to seize the relations which connect it with our misfortunes, often strike the imagination. Since my infancy I have always been afraid of dwelling in England ; well ! perhaps the

regret of not being able to live there, will be the cause of my despair, and I feel that in this respect there is something invincible in my fate, an obstacle against which I struggle in vain. Each one conceives his life internally quite different from what it is. We form a confused belief in a supernatural power, which acts without our knowledge, and conceals itself under exterior circumstances, whilst it is alone the cause of all. Those who are capable of reflexion, my love, incessantly plunge themselves into an abyss of which they never find the bottom ?"—Oswald, in hearing Corinna talk thus, was astonished that she could at once discover sentiments so impassioned, and so deliberately argumentative in judging of her own impressions.—“No,” said he to himself frequently, “no other society could suffice a man who has enjoyed the conversation of such a woman.”

They arrived over night at Ancona, because Lord Nelville was afraid of being recognised: but he was discovered in spite of his precautions, and the next morning all the inhabitants surrounded the house in which he slept. Corinna was awakened by cries of “ *long live Lord Nelville! Long live our Benefactor!*” Which resounded beneath her windows; she startled at these words, rose precipitately, and went to mix with the crowd, and hear the praises of him she loved. Lord Nelville, informed that the people demanded him with vehemence, was at length obliged to make his appearance. He believed that Corinna was yet asleep, and ignorant of what was passing; but what was his astonishment at seeing her in the midst of the square, already known, already beloved by all this grateful multitude, who besought her to serve them as an interpreter.

The imagination of Corinna took pleasure in all extraordinary circumstances, and this imagination was sometimes her charm, and sometimes her defect. She thanked Lord Nelville in the name of the people, and did it with so much nobleness and grace, that all the inhabitants of Ancona were delighted : she said “ *we,*” in speaking of them. “ *You have saved us, we owe you our life :*” and when she advanced to present him, in their name, with the crown of oak and of laurel, which they had prepared for him, she was seized with unspeakable emotion ; she felt intimidated as she approached Oswald. At this moment the people, with true Italian enthusiasm, prostrated themselves before him, and Corinna, involuntarily bent her knee in presenting him with the crown. Lord Nelville, at this sight was so troubled, that, unable to support any longer this

public scene, and the homage of her whom he adored, he hurried her out of the crowd along with him.

When they left the town, Corinna, bathed in tears, thanked the good inhabitants of Ancona, who accompanied them with their benedictions, whilst Oswald concealed himself in the back of the carriage, and incessantly repeated: "Corinna at my feet! Corinna, whose footsteps I would worship! Have I deserved this? Do you think I possess that unworthy pride?"—"No," undoubtedly, interrupted Corinna; "but I was suddenly struck with that respect which a woman always feels for the man she loves. Exterior homage is directed towards us; but in truth, and in nature, it is the woman who profoundly reveres him whom she has chosen for her protector.—" Yes; I will be thy protector to the last moment of my life," cried Lord Nelville, "Heaven be my wit-

ness ! So much mind, and so much genius, shall not be placed in vain, under the shield of my love !”—“ Alas ! ” replied Corinna, “ I want only that, and what promise could guarantee its continuance ; no matter, I feel that you love me now more than ever, let us not disturb this return.” —“ This return ! ” interrupted Oswald, “ Yes ; I do not retract that expression,” said Corinna ; “ but let us not explain it now,” continued she, gently motioning Lord Nelville to be silent.

CHAP. VI.

THEY journeyed for two days along the shores of the Adriatic ; but this does not produce, on the side of Romagna, the effect of the ocean ; nor even that of the Mediterranean. Its waves are skirted by the road, and grass grows on its borders—it is not thus that we represent to ourselves the formidable empire of tempests. At Rimini and at Césena we quit the classic ground, which is distinguished by the events of Roman history, and the last memento which offers itself is the Rubicon, which

Cesar crossed when he determined to render himself master of Rome. By a singular vicinity we now see, not far from the Rubicon, the republic of San Marino, as if this last feeble vestige of liberty were to subsist near the spot where the republic of the world was destroyed. From Ancona we advance by degrees towards a country which presents quite a different aspect from that of the ecclesiastical state. Bologna, Lombardy and the environs of Ferrara and Rovigo, are remarkable for their beauty and cultivation. We here no longer see that poetical devastation which announced the approach of Rome, and the terrible events which have passed there, we then quit

“ Les pins, deuil de l'été, parure des hivers,”

the cypress, the mountains and the sea. Nature, like the traveller, takes leave by degrees of the rays of the South, in the

first place the Orange trees no longer grow in the open air ; they are replaced by olive trees, whose pale verdure seems suited to the groves inhabited by shadows in the Elysian fields, and some leagues farther on, these olive trees themselves disappear.

On entering Bologna, we see a smiling plain, where vines, like garlands, unite the elm trees together ; the whole country seems adorned for an approaching fête. Corinna was moved by the contrast between her interior disposition of mind, and the external aspect of the country which struck her sight.---“ Oh !” said she, to Lord Nelville, “ Ought nature to offer so many forms of happiness to tender friends, who are, perhaps, about to separate.”---“ No ; they will not separate,” said Oswald, “ every day, I feel it more impossible ; your unchangeable sweetness, adds the charm of habit to the passion you inspire, we feel happy and easy in

your company, as if you were not a most admirable genius; or rather because you are so, for true superiority inspires a perfect goodness of disposition—in your presence we are satisfied with ourselves, with nature, and with others—what better sentiments then can we experience?”

They arrived together at Ferrara, one of the most melancholy cities in Italy; for it is at once extensive and desert. The few inhabitants it contains walk slowly through the streets, as if they were sure of finding time enough for all their occupations. We are at a loss to conceive how it can be that in this same spot that brilliant court existed which was sung by Ariosto and Tasso; manuscripts of their own writing are still shewn there, and some of the author of *Il Pastor Fido*.

Ariosto led a peaceable life in the midst of a court; but the house is still to be seen at Ferrara where Tasso was confined.

as a madman, and it is impossible to read, without being deeply affected, the number of letters in which this unfortunate man asks for that death which he has now so long ago obtained. Tasso possessed that particular organisation of talent which renders it formidable to its possessor; his imagination turned upon himself; he was only acquainted so well with all the secrets of the soul, he only possessed so much thought, because he had suffered much pain. “*He who has not suffered,*” says a prophet, “*What doth he know?*”

Corinna was in some respects a similar character: her mind was more gay, her impressions more various; but her imagination wanted equal attentions; for instead of diverting her grief, it increased its power. Lord Nelville was deceived in believing, as he often did, that the brilliant faculties of Corinna might give her means

of happiness, independant of her affections. When a person of genius is endowed with real sensibility, her sorrows are multiplied through her own faculties : she makes discoveries in her own internal pain, as well as in every other part of nature, and the woes of the heart being inexhaustible, the more ideas we have the more we feel them.

CHAP. VII.

You embark on the Brenta to arrive at Venice, and on both sides of the canal are seen the palaces of the Venetians, large, and rather dilapidated in the style of Italian magnificence. They are ornamented in a fantastical manner, partaking in no shape of the taste of antiquity. The Venetian architecture receives its character from their Eastern commerce ; it is a mixture of Moorish and Gothic taste, which excites curiosity without pleasing the imagination. The poplar, that tree of graceful symmetry, borders almost the whole canal. The sky is of a lively blue, which

forms a contrast with the vivid green of the fields; this green is cherished by the excessive abundance of the waters; thus the heaven and the earth present two colours so well matched, that nature itself seems to be artificially prepared; and here is not found that vague mystery which attaches us to the south of Italy. The aspect of Venice is more astonishing than agreeable: we believe, at first, that we see a city immersed in the sea, and reflection is necessary to admire the genius of those mortals who have conquered this watery realm. Naples is built in the form of an amphitheatre, on the coast; but Venice, being a flat ground, the steeples resemble the masts of ships at anchor in the sea. A melancholy sentiment fills the imagination on entering Venice. We take leave of vegetation: even a fly is not seen in this abode: all animals are banished from it; and man alone is there to combat with the sea.

A profound silence reigns in this city, whose streets are canals, and this silence is only broken by the noise of the oar; it is not country, because there is not a tree to be seen; it is not town, because the least motion is not heard; it is not even on ship-board, for you do not advance: it is an abode which the storm converts into a prison; for there are times when the inhabitants can neither quit the city, nor their own homes. There are men of the lower order at Venice, who have never been from one district to another, who have never seen the square of St. Mark, and for whom the sight of a horse or a tree, would be truly a wonder. Those black gondolas, which glide along the canals, resemble either coffins or cradles, either the first or the last abode of man. At night we see nothing pass but the lanterns which light the gondolas, whose dark colour then prevents their being seen. They

give you the idea of spectres gliding upon the water, guided by a little star. In this retreat all is mystery. The government, their manners, and their love. Undoubtedly there are many enjoyments for the reason and the heart, when we succeed in penetrating those secrets; but strangers must find the first impression of this city extremely gloomy.

Corinna, who believed in presentiment, and whose disturbed imagination drew forebodings from every thing, said to Lord Nelville:—"Whence proceeds the profound melancholy with which I feel seized on entering this city? Is it not a proof that I shall here meet with some great calamity?"—As she pronounced these words, she heard three reports of cannon in one of the islands of the Lagoon; Corinna startled at this sound, and asked the gondoliers the cause of it: "It is a nun, who is taking the veil," answered

they, “in one of those convents in the midst of the sea. The custom is with us, that at the moment a female utters the vow she casts behind her a bouquet of flowers, which she carries during the ceremony. It is the sign of her renunciation of the world; and the report of the cannon, which you heard, has announced that moment to us as we entered the city.” These words made Corinna shudder. Oswald felt her hands cold within his, and a deadly pale overspread her countenance. “My love,” said he “how can you let this accidental circumstance make so strong an impression on you?” “Ah!” said Corinna, “the flowers of life are for ever cast behind me.” —“How?” interrupted Oswald, “when I love you more than ever? when my whole soul is thine?” —“This martial thunder,” continued Corinna, “whose sound, elsewhere, announces either victory or death, is here consecrated to cele-

brate the obscure sacrifice of a young female. It is an innocent employment of these engines of destruction. 'Tis a solemn counsel, which a woman resigned to her fate gives to those who still struggle with destiny.

CHAP. VIII.

THE power of the Venetian government, during the last years of its existence, consisted almost entirely in the empire of custom, and of the imagination. It had been terrible; it was become extremely mild: it had been courageous; it was become timid: hatred against it was easily awakened, because it had been formidable; it was easily overthrown, because it was no longer so. It was an aristocracy, which sought the favour of the people; but after the manner of every despotic government, by amusing, not informing them. How-

ever, it is an agreeable condition enough for a people to be amused, especially in countries where the pleasures of the imagination are heightened by the climate, and by a taste for the fine arts, even in the lowest class of society. They did not offer the people those gross pleasures which brutalize them; but they gave them music, paintings, improvisators, and festivals, and the government watched over the people as a sultan does over his seraglio. The people were, like women, requested not to interfere with politics, nor presume to form an opinion upon those who governed them; but, in return, they were offered music, and even glory; for the spoils of Constantinople, which enrich the churches, the standards of Cyprus and of Candia, which wave in the public square, and the horses of Corinth, rejoice the eyes of the people; and the winged lion of St. Mark, appears to them an emblem of their fame.

The system of government forbidding the subjects to interfere in affairs of politics, and the situation of the city rendering agriculture, walking, and hunting impossible, the Venetians had nothing to do but to amuse themselves: thus this city was the city of pleasures. The Venetian dialect is as light and gentle as a soft breeze of wind; it is not to be conceived how those who resisted the League of Cambray could speak so flexible a language. This dialect is charming, when consecrated to grace and pleasantry; but when employed on graver objects, when we hear a requiem to the dead, sung in these delicate, and almost infantine sounds, we are led to believe that this event so sung, is only a poetical fiction.

The men in general are more intelligent in Venice than in the rest of Italy, because their government, such as it was, more frequently offered them occasions for

thinking; but their imagination is not naturally so ardent as in the South of Italy; and the women, for the most part, though very agreeable, have acquired, from living in the world, a sentimental language, which not restraining at all their freedom of manners, only serves to give affectation to gallantry. The great merit of the Italians, in the midst of all their faults, is to have no vanity: this merit is a little lost at Venice, where there is more society than in any other part of Italy, and society is the soil most favorable to the growth of vanity. You are there applauded, so quickly, and so often, that all endeavours to obtain praise are instantaneous, and there is no occasion to *give credit to time* a single minute for approbation. Nevertheless, there is still to be found at Venice, many traces of the originality and facility of Italian manners. The highest ladies receive their visits in

the coffee-houses of the square of St. Mark, and the confusion of these assemblies is not favorable to the contests of self-love.

There remains also much of the popular manners and customs of the ancients. These customs necessarily suppose respect for our ancestors, and a certain juvenility of heart, which does not grow weary of the past, nor of the tender emotion which it causes; besides the aspect of the city is of itself peculiarly adapted to awaken a crowd of reflections and of ideas; the square of St. Mark, all surrounded with blue tents, under which repose numbers of Turks, Grecians, and Armenians, is terminated at the extremity by the church, whose exterior more resembles a mosque than a Christian temple; this spot gives an idea of the indolent life of the inhabitants of the East, who pass their days in coffee-houses, drinking sherbet,

and smoking perfumes. We sometimes see, at Venice, Turks and Armenians pass by, carelessly reclined in open boats, with flower pots at their feet.

The men and women of the first rank, never go out without being clad in a black domino, often too their gondolas, which are always black, for equality at Venice is chiefly confined to exterior objects, are rowed by men dressed in white, with crimson sashes—there is something striking in this contrast: one would say that gay attire is abandoned to the people, whilst the great give themselves up to mourning. In most European cities, the imagination of a writer must carefully avoid all that passes every day; because our customs, and even our luxury, are not poetical. But at Venice nothing of this kind is vulgar: the canals and the boats form a picture of the most simple events of life.

On the *Slaves Quay* we habitually meet with puppet-shews, mountebanks, and narrators, who address themselves in every way to the imagination of the people; the narrators are particularly worthy of attention; they generally recite episodes from Tasso and Ariosto, to the great admiration of their hearers. The audience, seated round him who speaks, are for the most part half-naked, and motionless from excess of attention; they bring them glasses of water, from time to time, which are paid for like wine in other countries, and this simple refreshment is all that those people require for hours together, so much is their mind occupied. The narrator makes the most animated gestures in the world; his voice is loud; he is angry, and impassioned, and, nevertheless, we may see that he is perfectly tranquil at bottom; and we might say to him, like Sappho to the Bacchante, who, with perfect *sang-*

froid appeared disturbed: “*Sober Bacchante, what do you want of me?*” Nevertheless the animated pantomime of the inhabitants of the South does not give any idea of affection; it is a singular habit which they have acquired from the Romans, as great gesticulators as themselves; a habit which proceeds from their lively, brilliant, and poetical disposition.

The imagination of a people, captivated by pleasure, was easily terrified by the spells of power, with which the Venetian government was surrounded. A soldier was never seen at Venice; the theatre was crowded when one appeared in the performance with a drum; but a sbire of the state inquisition, wearing a ducat in his cap, had only to shew himself to reduce to order thirty thousand men, assembled on a day of public rejoicing. It would be a fine thing if this simple power proceeded from respect for the laws; but it has been

established by terror of the secret measures employed by government to establish repose in the state. The prisons (a very singular thing) were in the palace of the Doge ; some were over, and others under his apartment ; the *Lion's Mouth*, where all accusations were put in, was also at the palace inhabited by the chief of the government. The hall of the state inquisitors was covered with black, and day only entered from above ; trial seemed a preparation before hand for condemnation ; *the Bridge of Sighs*, so it is called, conducted from the palace of the Doge to the prison of the state criminals. On passing the canal, which bordered these prisons, was heard, "*Justice ! Help !*" uttered, with confused groans, that could not be distinguished. At length, when a state criminal was condemned, a boat came for him during the night ; he was taken out at a little door which opened upon the canal ;

conducted to some distance from the city, and drowned in a part of the Lagoon, where it is forbidden to fish: horrible idea! which perpetuates secrecy after death, and does not allow the unhappy victim a hope that even his remains will inform his friends that he has suffered, and is no more!

At the epoch when Corinna and Lord Nelville visited Venice, such executions had been discontinued for nearly a century; but that mystery which strikes the imagination still existed; and though Lord Nelville was farther than anybody from mingling in any manner with the political interests of a foreign country, yet he felt oppressed by that arbitrary power which seemed, at Venice, to hover over every head.

CHAP. IX.

“ You must not,” said Corinna to Lord Nelville, “ confine yourself barely to the painful impressions which this silent system of power has produced on you. You must also observe the great qualities of that senate, which made Venice a republic of nobles, and inspired them formerly with that energy, that aristocratic greatness, the fruit of liberty, even when concentrated in a few. You will see them, severe towards one another, establish, at least in their own bosoms, those virtues and rights which ought to belong to all ; you

will find them paternal towards their subjects, as much as it is possible to be, when we consider that class of men merely with regard to their physical welfare. In effect, you will find them proud of their native country, of that country which is their property, and which they know how to make beloved by the people, who are in so many respects excluded from such property."

Oswald and Corinna went together to the hall, where the two hundred were then assembled; it is hung all round with the portraits of the Doges; but in the place of his portrait, who was beheaded as a traitor to his country, a black curtain is painted, on which is inscribed the day of his death, and the nature of his punishment. The royal and magnificent robes in which the other Doges are clad, add to the impression of this terrible black curtain. There is in this hall a picture representing the last judgment; and another the mo-

ment, when the most powerful of Emperors, Frederic Barbarossa, did homage before the senate of Venice. It is a fine idea to unite thus all that can exalt the pride of an earthly government, and all that can curb this very pride in the face of Heaven. Corinna and Lord Nelville went to see the arsenal. There are before the gate of the arsenal two lions, sculptured in Greece, and since transported from the port of Athens, to be the guardians of the Venetian power.--Motionless guardians, who defend nothing but that which is respected. The arsenal is filled with marine trophies; the famous ceremony of the wedding of the Doge with the Adriatic, all the institutions of Venice, in fact, attest their acknowledgement for the sea. They are like the English in this respect, and Lord Nelville felt strongly the interest which this resemblance ought to excite in him.

Corinna then conducted him to the tower, called the steeple of St. Mark, which is at some steps from the church. It is thence that the whole city is seen in the midst of the waves, as well as the immense mole which defends it from the sea.

At a distance is seen the coasts of Istria and Dalmatia.—“ Yonder, enveloped in clouds,” said Corinna, “ is Greece! Is not that idea sufficient to produce emotion? There dwell men of a lively imagination, of an enthusiastic character, debased by their fate; but destined, perhaps, as well as us to reanimate some day the ashes of their forefathers. It is always something that a nation has existed, its inhabitants, at least, blush for their actual condition; but in countries that history has never consecrated, man does not even suspect that there is any destiny beyond that servile obscurity which has been transmitted to him by his ancestors.

“ Dalmatia, which you perceive from here,” continued Corinna, “ and which was formerly inhabited by so warlike a people, still preserves a character somewhat ferocious. The Dalmatians are so little acquainted with what has passed since fifteen centuries ago, that they still call the Romans : “ *the all-powerful.*” It is true that they shew more modern information, in naming you, Englishmen, the “ *Warriors of the Sea,*” because you have frequently landed in their ports ; but they know nothing at all of the rest of the world.” “ I am pleased,” pursued Corinna, “ with every country, in whose manners, customs, and language, there is something original. The civilized world is very monotonous and in a little time we are entirely acquainted with it.—I have already lived long enough for that.”—“ When we live with you,” interrupted Lord Nelville, “ is there ever any limit

to our thoughts and our feelings !”—“ God send,” replied Corinna, “ that this charm may not also become exhausted.

“ But, let us,” pursued she, “ bestow another moment upon Dalmatia ; when we are descended from this eminence, we shall no longer be able to perceive those uncertain lines which indicate to us this distant country as confusedly as an imperfect recollection in the memory of man. There are *improvisators* among the Dalmatians—even among these savages : they existed among the ancient Greeks, and are almost always to be found among people who possess much imagination and little social vanity. The mind turns to epigram, rather than to poetry, in countries where the fear of ridicule makes each one hasten to seize this weapon first : those people also, who have remained nearest a state of nature, have preserved a respect for the goddess, which is a great aid to the imagi-

nation. “ *The caverns are sacred,*” say the Dalmatians, undoubtedly, they mean by this to express an indefinite terror of the secrets of the earth. Their poetry resembles, in some degree, that of Ossian, although they are inhabitants of the South ; but there are only two very distinct manners of feeling nature: to animate and bring it to perfection like the ancients ; or to yield, like the Scotch Bards, to the terror of mystery, and to that melancholy, which is inspired by the uncertain and the unknown. — Since I have known you, Oswald, this last species has been most pleasing to me. Before, I possessed sufficient hope to love pleasing images, and to enjoy nature without fearing destiny.” — “ It will be I then,” said Oswald, “ who shall have withered that fine imagination to whom I owe the most intoxicating enjoyments of my life ?” — “ It will not be you whom I ought to accuse for it,” answered Corin-

na, “ but a deeply-rooted passion. Talent has need of an internal independance which true love always destroys.”—“ Ah!” cried Lord Nelville, “ then thy genius will be silent, and thy heart entirely mine!” He could not utter these words without emotion ; for they promised in his mind more than he said.—Corinna comprehended him, and dared not make any answer for fear of deranging the gentle impression which she felt.

She knew herself beloved, and as she had been accustomed to live in a country where men sacrifice all to sentiment, she easily acquired confidence, and persuaded herself that Lord Nelville could not leave her: at once, indolent and passionate, she imagined that it was sufficient to gain time, and that the danger, no longer talked of, was gone by. In effect, Corinna lived as the greater part of mankind generally do when they are long threatened with the

same misfortune ; they finish by believing that it will never happen, only because it it is not yet arrived.

The air of Venice, and the mode of life led there, are singularly adapted to lull the soul in a dream of hope : the tranquil motion of the gondolas at once inspires indolence and reverie. A gondolier is sometimes heard on the bridge of the Rialto singing a stanza of Tasso, whilst another gondolier answers him in the following stanza, at the other extremity of the canal. The very ancient melody of these stanzas resembles church music, and, when near us, we perceive its monotony ; but at evening, in the open air, when these sounds are prolonged on the canal, like the reflection of the setting sun, and when the verse of Tasso lends also its beauties of sentiment to this union of images and harmony, it is impossible not to be impressed by these strains with a gentle melancholy. Oswald

and Corinna, seated side by side, in a gondola, would take an excursion on the water for hours together. Sometimes they spoke, more often holding each other by the hand, they yielded in silence to those vague thoughts which love and nature give birth to.

BOOK XVI.

Departure and Absence.

CHAPTER I.

As soon as the arrival of Corinna at Venice was known, each one had the greatest curiosity to see her. When she appeared at a coffee-house of St. Mark, they pressed in crowds under the galleries of the square to get a momentary glance at her, and all the company sought her notice with the most eager impatience. She was formerly very fond of producing this brilliant effect

wherever she went, and naturally avowed that admiration had a great charm for her. Genius inspires a thirst for glory ; besides there is no earthly blessing which is not desired by those whom nature has given the means of obtaining it. Nevertheless, in her present situation, Corinna dreaded every thing which seemed in contrast with those habits of domestic life, so dear to Lord Nelville.

Corinna was in the wrong, as far as regarded her happiness, to attach herself to a man whose character led him to reverse her natural existence, and to repress, rather than excite her talents ; but it is easy to conceive how a woman, who has devoted herself to literature and the fine arts, could love a man whose qualities and tastes were different from her own. She is so often tired of herself that she cannot be seduced by any thing resembling her : characters must be in harmony, for love to be born

at once of sympathy and diversity. Lord Nelville possessed in the highest degree this double charm. He was in unison with Corinna in his habits of life, and in the mildness and facility of his conversation ; yet the irritable and cloudy disposition of his soul prevented him from shining in grace and complaisance of manners. Though the depth and the extent of his ideas rendered him equal to any mental pursuit, yet his political opinions, and his military disposition, inclined him more to the career of action, than to that of letters ; he thought, that action was always more poetical than even poetry itself. He appeared superior to the energies of his mind, and spoke of them with the greatest indifference. Corinna, in order to shape herself to his disposition, in this respect, sought to imitate him, and despised her own literary reputation, in order, the more to resemble the modest and retired

females, whom the native country of Oswald offered for a model.

However, the homage paid to Corinna, at Venice, produced on Lord Nelville no other than an agreeable impression. There was so much benignity in the reception of the Venetians, they expressed with so much grace and vivacity the pleasure they took in the conversation of Corinna, that Oswald felt an exquisite enjoyment in being beloved by a woman so captivating, and so generally admired. He was no longer jealous of the glory of Corinna; certain, as he was, that she preferred him to every other man, and his love was augmented by hearing her praises from the lips of others. He even forgot England, and became a little like the Italians, careless of the future. Corinna perceived this alteration, and her imprudent heart rejoiced at it, not thinking how long it was probable such a change could last.

Italian is the only European language whose different dialects have a peculiar and distinct genius. One may write verses and compose books in each of these dialects, which deviate, more or less, from classical Italian; but, however, among the different languages of the different states of Italy, there are only the Neapolitan, the Sicilian, and the Venetian that have the honour to being reckoned as such; and it is the Venetian which passes for the most original, and the most sweet of all: Corinna pronounced it with admirable softness, and the manner in which she sang some *barcaroles* in the gay style, proved that her talents were equally adapted for comedy as for tragedy. She was very pressingly solicited to take a part in a comic opera, which was to be represented in private the following week. Corinna, since she had loved Oswald, had never wished to let him know her comic powers; she did not feel her

mind sufficiently at liberty for such an amusement, and feared, that yielding to a temporary excess of gaiety might entail unhappiness in its consequences, by injuring her in Oswald's opinion; but this time, from a singular confidence, she consented. Oswald, indeed, was as pressing as any of the rest, and it was agreed that she should perform "*The Daughter of Air*," which was the title of the piece chosen for the occasion.

This piece, like the greater part of those of Gozzi, was composed of extravagant fairy frolics, extremely original and very gay (7). Truffaldin and Pantaloon, often appear in these burlesque dramas, in company with the greatest kings of the earth. The marvellous is made subservient to pleasantry; but the comic humour is relieved by that very marvellous, which has never any thing vulgar and low in it. "*The Daughter of Air; or Semiramis*

in her Youth," is the coquette gifted from heaven and hell, to subjugate the world. Brought up in a wilderness, like a savage, skilful as an enchantress, and imperious as a queen, she unites natural vivacity to premeditated grace, martial courage to female frivolity, and ambition to folly. This character demands a poetical enthusiasm of the imagination, which only the inspiration of the moment can give. The whole company were unanimous in requesting Corinna to take it.

CHAP. II.

THERE is sometimes in destiny a cruel and fantastical disposition to sport with mortals. One would say it is a power that wishes to inspire fear, and repel the confidence of familiarity; often when we yield most to hope, and above all, when we appear to jest with fate, and reckon upon happiness, something formidable passes in the tissue of our history, the fatal sisters interweave it with their sable thread, and spoil the work of our hands.

It was the 17th of November, when Corinna awoke, quite enchanted at the prospect

of the evening's performance. She chose a very picturesque dress for the first act, when she appears as a savage. Her hair, which was to be dishevelled, was nevertheless arranged, with an attention which shewed a lively desire to please, and her elegant, light, and fantastic habit gave to her noble figure a character of coquetry and design most particularly winning. She arrived at the palace where the comedy was to be performed. All the company was assembled with the exception of Oswald, who was not yet arrived. Corinna retarded the performance as much as she could, and began to feel uneasy at his absence. At length as she came on the stage, she perceived him in an obscure corner of the house ; and the pain she had felt in expecting him, redoubling her joy, she was now inspired by gaiety, as she had been at the Capitol by enthusiasm.

The singing and the words were inter-

mixed, and the piece was so constructed, that in the dialogue Corinna was allowed to indulge her extempore genius, which gave her great advantage, and rendered the scene more animated ; when she sang, she conveyed the spirit of the comic airs with singular elegance. Her gestures, accompanied by the music, were at once comic and noble ; she excited mirth without losing her dignity, and her character and her talent charmed the actors and the spectators, by gracefully sporting with both.

Ah ! who would not have been inspired with pity, who had known that the storm was gathering which would soon obscure this sunshine of happiness !

The applauses of the spectators were so multiplied, and so genuine, that their pleasure was imparted to Corinna ; she felt, for a moment, that kind of emotion which amusement causes when it gives us a more

lively sense of existence, when it inspires oblivion for destiny, and disengaging the mind for a moment from every tie, removes from it every cloud. Oswald had seen Corinna represent the most profound grief, when he flattered himself with the hope of rendering her completely happy ; he now beheld her depicting unmixed joy, when he had just received news fatal to the peace of both. Often he thought of snatching Corinna from this delirium of gaiety ; but he felt a melancholy pleasure in beholding, some moments longer, upon that lovely countenance the animated expression of happiness.

At the conclusion of the piece Corinna appeared dressed like an Amazonian Queen ; she commanded man, and almost the elements, by that confidence in her charms, which a beautiful woman may feel when she does not possess a refined

sensibility ; nor will love permit any gift of nature to excite in the possessor a reliance on its power. But this sovereign coquette, this crowned fairy, whom Corinna represented, blending, in a wonderful manner, anger with pleasantry, indifference with the desire of pleasing, and grace with despotism, seemed to reign over destiny as much as over the human heart, and when she ascended her throne, she smiled on her subjects in enforcing their submission, with a species of pleasing arrogance. All the spectators rose to do homage to Corinna as if she were the real Queen. Perhaps at no moment of her life was the fear of sorrow more distant from her mind than then ; but on a sudden, she perceived Oswald, who, unable to contain himself, concealed his face with his hands in order to hide his tears. In an instant she was alarmed, and the cur-

tain was hardly down, when, descending the fatal throne, she darted into an adjoining room.

Oswald followed her thither, and now near enough to remark his paleness, she was so seized with terror as to be obliged to support herself against the wall, when trembling she said to him :—" Good heavens, Oswald, what's the matter ?"—" I must depart for England this night," said he, without knowing what he uttered, or he would not have so exposed the wretched fair, by communicating to her this news. She advanced towards him, quite distracted, and cried :—" No, it cannot be—you are not so cruel ! What have I done to deserve it ? But surely you will take me with you ?"—" Let us quit this odious crowd," answered Oswald, " Come with me, Corinna."—She followed him, without comprehending a word that was said to

her by the audience, who were eager to compliment her on her performance—she answered at random—she tottered—and her countenance was so changed that every one believed her seized with some sudden indisposition.

CHAP. III.

WHEN they both entered the gondola, Corinna, in her distraction, said to Lord Nelville—"Well, Oswald, since what you have told me is a thousand times more cruel than death, be generous, and plunge me into these waves, that I may forget the sentiment that preys on my heart. Do not lack courage to perform this obligation; it surely required less, to give the blow you have just aimed at my life!"—"Speak another word," said Oswald, "and here in thy sight, I will plunge into this canal. Hear me, wait till we

are arrived at home, then you shall decide my fate and your own. For God's sake be calm." So woeful were the accents of Oswald, that Corinna was silent; but trembled so violently, that she could hardly ascend the staircase which led to her apartment. When she had reached it she tore off her ornaments in despair, and Lord Nelville contrasting her present condition with that of the brilliant theatrical Queen, a few minutes before, threw himself into a chair, and melting into tears, cried ;—
“ Am I barbarian? Good God! Corinna, do you believe it?”—“ No,” said she to him, “ I cannot believe it. Do I not still behold that look which every day conveyed happiness to my soul. Do I not see you, Oswald, whose presence was for me like a ray of heaven! It cannot be, that I now tremble before him, as before an assassin! Oh, no Oswald, it cannot be!”—
—And in finishing these words, she fell suppliant at his knees.

“What do I see?” cried he, rising with fury—“You wish to dishonour me? Well, be it so.—My regiment embarks within a month.—I have just received information of it.—Now, mark me, I will stay—your grief has the power to retain me; but I will not survive my shame.”—“I do not ask you to stay,” replied Corinna, “but why may I not accompany you?”—“My regiment is going to the Isles, and no officer is permitted to take his wife with him.”—“At least then, let me accompany you to England.”—“By the same letters,” answered Oswald, “I have just learned, that the report of our attachment has reached England, that the public papers have mentioned it; that it is suspected who you are, and that your family excited by Lady Edgermond have declared they will never acknowledge you. Allow me time to bring them about.—I will force your mother-in-law to what

she owes you ; but should you accompany me to England now, and I be constrained to leave you, before I have established your good name, I shall abandon you to all the severity of public opinion, without being present to defend you.”—“ Thus, you refuse me every thing,” said Corinna, and in uttering these words, she fell senseless on the floor, where her head struck with such violence, that the blood gushed out. Oswald, at this spectacle, called out, in the most moving manner. Theresa arrived in a dreadful alarm, and brought her mistress to her senses. But when Corinna, came to herself, she perceived in a glass, her visage pale and terror-struck, and her hair dishevelled and stained with gore.—“ Oswald,” said she, “ Oswald, I was not thus when you saw me at the Capitol—My forehead was encircled with the laurel of fame ; now it is covered with blood and humbled in the dust ; but you

cannot despise me for the condition to which I am reduced ; others may, but you cannot—no, you cannot: you must pity the love you have inspired me with—you must.” —“ Hold,” cried Lord Nelville—“ it is too much !” and making a sign for Theresa to withdraw, he took Corinna in his arms, and said to her:—“ I am determined to stay—you shall do with me what you will. I will submit to what heaven destines me to, but I will not leave you in your present situation, nor will I conduct you to England till I have established your fortunes. I will not leave you there exposed to the insults of a haughty woman ; I will stay—yes, I will stay ; for I cannot leave you.”—These words brought Corinna to herself, but threw her into a dejection still more cruel than the despair she had just experienced. She felt the necessity that weighed upon her, and her head hanging down, she remained some moments buried in profound silence.—

“Speak my love,” said Oswald to her—
“let me hear the sound of your voice; I have no longer any support but you; you are now my only guide.”—“No,” answered Corinna, “You shall go—it is necessary”—and torrents of tears announced her resignation.—“My love,” cried Lord Nelville, “I call to witness this portrait of thy father, which is here before our eyes, and you know whether or not I hold the name of father sacred! I take it to witness that my life is thine as long as it shall be necessary to thy happiness. On my return from the Isles, I shall see whether I cannot restore thee to thy paternal country, and to that rank and consideration which are thy due; but if I do not succeed, I will return to Italy, and live and die at thy feet.”—“Alas!” said Corinna, are you not going to brave the dangers of war?”—“Fear not,” replied Oswald, “I shall escape them; but, how-

ever, should I perish, the most unknown of men, my memory would remain in thy heart: perhaps you would never hear my name pronounced, but your eyes would be filled with tears—is it not true, Corinna? You would say, *I knew him, he loved me!*”—“ Ah! leave me, leave me,” cried she, “ you are deceived by my apparent calm. To-morrow, when the sun rises, I shall say to myself: *He is gone! I shall see him no more!* and probably this heart may cease its bursting throbs in death! Ah! that will be happy!”—“ Why,” cried Lord Nelville, “ Why, Corinna, do you fear that I shall not return? Is the solemn promise which I have given to unite myself to you for ever, nothing in your estimation? do you doubt its sincerity?”—“ No, I respect you too much to disbelieve you,” said Corinna, “ It would cost me more to renounce my admiration of you than my love. I con-

sider you as an angelic being, as the most pure and noble character that ever appeared on earth ; it is not your exterior that captivates me—it is the idea that so many virtues have never before been united in the same object, and your celestial look was given you to express them all ; far be from me than a doubt of your sincerity. I should fly at the sight of the human figure ; it would for ever be an object of terror to me, if Lord Nelville could deceive ; but separation leaves us to so many chances ; but that terrible word—*Adieu !*”—“Never,” interrupted he, “never can Oswald bid you an eternal adieu, except on his death bed.”—Such was his emotion in uttering these words, that Corinna beginning to fear for the effect which this emotion would produce on his health, tried to contain herself, though she was the greater object of pity.

They then began to talk about this cruel departure, of the means of writing to each other, and the certainty of meeting again. A year was the term fixed for this absence. Oswald believed himself sure that the expedition would not last longer; therefore Corinna endeavoured to assume sufficient strength to support the few hours that remained. But when Oswald told her that the gondola was to come for him at three o'clock in the morning, and when she saw by her clock that this moment was not far distant, she shook in every limb; certainly the approach of the scaffold could not have caused her more terror. Oswald seemed to lose his resolution every minute, and Corinna, who had always seen him in full possession of himself, felt her heart torn with the sight of his anguish. Poor Corinna! She consoled him, whilst she ought to be herself a thousand times more wretched.

“Hear me,” said she to Lord Nelville, when you go to London, they will tell you, yes, the light gentlemen of that city will tell you, that honor is not bound by the promises of love; that every Englishman has loved an Italian in his travels, and forgotten her on his return; that some months of happiness neither engages the party who confers, nor the party who receives it, and that at your age, the comfort of your whole life ought not to depend on the charm which you may have found, during some months, in the company of a foreigner. They will talk reasonably—in the opinion of the world; but you, Oswald, who know this heart, of which you are become the master, you who know how it loves you, will you find sophisms to excuse the mortal wound you would give it? Would the frivolous and cruel pleasantries of the men of the day, prevent your hand from trembling in plunging a poignard into my bosom?”—

“ Ah! what is it you say ?” cried Lord Nelville, “ it is not thy grief alone which retains me; it is my own. Where will I find happiness like that I have tasted with you? With what being in the universe can my heart communicate in the same manner that it has with thee. It is thou alone, Corinna, who art capable of feeling and inspiring love. Him on whom thou hast bestowed thy affection, is not a frivolous character, thou knowest he is not. Life for him is all serious, will it be for you alone that he will belie his nature ?”

“ No, no,” replied Corinna, “ you will not treat with disdain a soul sincere. It will not be you, Oswald, no it will not be you that I shall find insensible to my despair. But there is in your country a formidable enemy that threatens me—it is the despotic severity, the disdainful mediocrity of my mother-in-law. She will

tell you all that may blast my past days. Spare my repeating to you her pitiless speeches. So far from my talents proving an excuse in her sight, they will be, I know it, my greatest crime: she is unable to comprehend their charms—she only sees the danger to which they expose their possessor. She condemns, as useless, and even as guilty, all that does not agree with the destiny which she has chalked out for herself, and each poetic feeling of the heart, appears to her a caprice which arrogates to itself the right of despising reason. It is in the name of those virtues which I respect as much as you, that she will condemn my character and my lot. She will tell you, Oswald, that I am unworthy of you.”—“And how shall I listen to her?” interrupted Oswald, “what virtues can she presume to extol beyond thy generosity, thy frankness, thy goodness, and thy tenderness? Celestial creature!

let only common women be judged by common rules ! But shame on him who has been beloved by thee, and who would not respect himself as much as he adores thee ! Nothing in the universe can equal thy mind and thy heart. At the divine source, whence thy sentiments emanate, all is love and truth. Alas ! Corinna, I cannot leave thee : I feel my courage fail. If thou dost not support me I cannot obey the call of duty.—It is from thee I must receive fortitude sufficient to afflict thy tender soul.” “ Well,” said Corinna, “ a few minutes longer before I recommend my soul to God, to give me strength to hear the hour strike which is fixed for thy departure. We have loved each other, Oswald, with the most profound tenderness. I have confided to thee all the secrets of my life: they contain nothing but facts ; you are acquainted with the most intimate sentiment of my soul. I have

not an idea unconnected with you. Every effusion of my mind is inspired by you; it is to you I address myself, my every thought and my last dying breath will be for you. Where then will be my asylum if you abandon me? In painting I retrace thy image, in music, thy voice, and in heaven thy look. My genius is now synonymous with love. Enthusiasm, reflection, intelligence are all synonymous with thee.

“All powerful God, who hearest me!” said she, lifting up her eyes towards heaven “Thou who dost not regard without pity the most noble of all human sufferings—those of the heart—take from me my life when Oswald shall cease to love me! Take from me that deplorable remnant of existence, which will then be wholly devoted to misery! He will carry with him all that is generous and tender in my soul; should that flame, which I

have deposited in his bosom, become extinguished, in whatever part of the world I may be, let the lamp of my life become extinguished also! Great God! you have not formed me to survive every noble sentiment, and what shall I have left when I shall esteem Oswald no longer? He ought to love me! Yes, he ought! I feel at the bottom of my heart an affection which demands his. O my God!" cried she, "once more give me death, or Oswald's love!"—In finishing this prayer, she turned to Nelville, and found him prostrate before her, in most terrible convulsions: the excess of his emotion had surpassed his strength—he repelled the succour of Corinna—he wished to die—he appeared bereft of reason. Corinna, with gentle softness pressed his hands between hers in repeating to him all that he had said himself. She assured him that she believed his words, that she relied on his return, and

that she felt herself more calm : these assisted greatly to bring Lord Nelville to himself. Nevertheless, the nearer the hour of separation approached, the more he felt it impossible to determine upon it.

“ Why,” said he to Corinna “ Why should we not go to the temple of religion before my departure, and there pronounce the oath of eternal union ?” — Corinna started at these words.—She looked at Lord Nelville, and her heart was greatly agitated. She recollected that Oswald, in relating his history, had told her that a woman’s grief had an irresistible sway upon his conduct, but that he had added, his affection became chilled by the sacrifices which that grief might obtain from him : all the firmness, all the pride of Corinna was alarmed at this idea, and after some moments of silence, she said to him :—
“ You must behold your friends and native country again, before you form reso-

lution of espousing me—I will not take advantage of the emotion caused by our separation.”—Oswald did not insist any farther: “at least,” said he to her, “seizing the hand of Corinna, “I swear it afresh—my faith is attached to the ring which I have given you. As long as you preserve it, never can another possess any power over my heart;—should you ever disdain it—should you return it to me”—“Forbear,” interrupted Corinna, “forbear to anticipate impossibility! Alas! it will not be I who will first break the sacred union of our hearts, — you know it will not, and I ought almost to blush at attempting to give stronger confirmation to that which is but too certain.”—

In the mean time the hour approached; Corinna grew pale at every noise, and Lord Nelville remained plunged in profound grief, without courage to utter a single word. At length the fatal light appeared

at a distance through the window, and soon after the sable bark stopped before the door. At this sight Corinna shrieked, and recoiling with horror, fell into the arms of Oswald, crying—"There they are! farewell! it is all over!"—"Oh Heaven!" said Lord Nelville, "O my father! do you require it of me!" and pressing her to his heart, he covered her with his tears.—"Go," said she to him, "go, you must."—"Call Theresa," said Oswald, "I cannot leave you thus alone."—"Alone!" said Corinna, "Alas! shall I not ever be alone till your return!"—"I cannot quit this chamber," cried Lord Nelville, "no, I cannot!" and such was his despair in pronouncing these words, that his look seemed to invoke death.—"Well," said Corinna, "I will give the signal, I will open the door myself, but grant me a few moments longer."—"Oh yes!" cried Lord Nelville, "let us remain together

some time longer; even these cruel conflicts that tear my soul are preferable to your absence."

They then heard the gondoliers, beneath the windows, calling Lord Nelville's servants; they answered, and one of them came to knock at Corinna's door, announcing that *all was ready*.—"Yes, all is ready," answered Corinna, and, quitting Oswald, she knelt down to prayer, with her head leaning against the portrait of her father. Without doubt, at this moment, her passed life presented itself entirely to her view; her conscience exaggerated all her faults, she feared herself unworthy of divine mercy, and nevertheless her sufferings left her no hope but the pity of Heaven. At length, rising up, she stretched her hand to Lord Nelville, and said to him:—"Go, I can now support your departure: perhaps in another instant that may not be the case: Go, may God bless

you, and may he also protect me, for I shall need his protection.—Oswald threw himself once more into her arms, and pressing her to his heart with inexpressible passion, he, trembling and pale, like a man conducted to execution, quitted this room, where, perhaps, for the last time, he had felt a love, of which destiny could not produce a second example.

When Oswald disappeared from Corinna's sight, she was seized with a dreadful palpitation, which left her not the power to breathe; every object around her lost the appearance of reality and seemed to move backwards and forwards; she thought the room was shaken as by an earthquake, and clung to a table to support herself. During a quarter of an hour she heard the noise of Oswald's servants completing the preparations for their departure. He was still in the gondola—she might behold him again, but could not trust herself:

and he, on his part, was lying down in the gondola, almost senseless. At length he departed, at that moment Corinna darted out of the room to recal him.—Theresa stopped her. The rain then fell in torrents ; a most violent wind arose, and the house in which Corinna dwelt was shaken like a vessel in the midst of the sea. She was terribly alarmed for Oswald traversing the Lagoon in this dreadful weather, and descended to the banks of the canal, in the design of embarking and following him at least to land. But the night was so dark that there was not a single bark to be seen. Corinna walked in extreme agitation along the narrow stones which separated the canal from the houses. The storm continually increased, and her fears for Oswald redoubled every instant: she called to the gondoliers, who took her cries for those of some wretch drowning in the tempest ; nevertheless, none dared approach to

offer assistance, so formidable were the waves of the great canal.

Corinna, in this situation, waited till day-break. The weather, however, became calm, and the gondolier who had taken Oswald, returning, brought her word that he had safely passed the Lagoons. This was a moment of happiness, and it was not until after some hours that the unfortunate Corinna felt anew, the absence, the lengthened hours, the melancholy days, and the uneasy and devouring pain which was now her portion.

CHAP. IV.

OSWALD, during the first days of his voyage, was twenty times on the point of returning to join Corinna ; but the motives which hurried him away triumphed over this desire. It is a solemn step taken in love, to have vanquished it once ; the charm of its omnipotence is then broken.

In approaching England, all the recollections of his native country entered the soul of Oswald again ; the year, which he had just passed in Italy, did not correspond with any other epoch of his life. It was like a dazzling vision, which affected

his imagination, without entirely altering the opinion and taste which till then had composed his existence. He found himself again, and although the regret at being separated from Corinna, hindered him from receiving any impression of happiness, he acquired a solidity in his ideas, which the vague and intoxicating charm of the fine arts had made to disappear. As soon as he had set foot on English ground, he was struck with the order, the ease, the riches, and the industry which offered themselves to his sight, and all the habits and dispositions, originally born with him, were now awakened in his soul with more force than ever. In this country, where the men possess so much dignity, and the women so much modesty, where domestic felicity is the bond of public happiness, Oswald thought of Italy with pity. In his native country, human reason was every where nobly imprinted; whilst in

Italy the social institutions and social condition, in many respects, only betrayed confusion, weakness, and ignorance. Seductive pictures, and poetical impressions, gave place in his heart to the profound sentiment of liberty and morality; and although he loved Corinna as much as ever, he greatly blamed her for being weary of living in a country which appeared to him so noble and so wise. Had he, indeed, passed from a country where imagination is deified into a barren or frivolous nation, his whole soul would have turned towards Italy; but he exchanged the indefinite desire of a romantic happiness for the pride of possessing the real benefits of life, independance and security. He re-entered that sphere of existence most suitable to man—action with an object. Reverie is rather the lot of woman—weak and resigned from her birth; man will obtain what he desires,

and the habit of courage, the consciousness of strength, makes him indignant at fate, if he cannot direct it according to his desire.

Oswald, on arriving in London, found again the friends of his youth. He heard spoken, that nervous and concise language which seems to indicate much more thought than it expresses—he beheld again those serious countenances, which suddenly unfold themselves when profound affections triumph over their habitual reserve ; he again found the pleasure of making discoveries in those hearts, which reveal themselves by degrees to the eye of observation ; in a word, he felt himself in his native country, and those who have never quitted it, know not by how many ties it is dear to us. However, Oswald did not separate the idea of Corinna from any of his impressions, and as he felt more attachment than ever for

Great Britain, and more aversion for quitting it again, all his reflections tended to fix him in the resolution of espousing Corinna, and settling with her in Scotland.

He was impatient to embark, that his return might be hastened, when an order arrived to suspend the departure of the expedition of which his regiment formed a part; but he was informed, at the same time, that no one could know from one day to another when the order might cease; in consequence of this uncertainty no officer could command a fortnight. This situation rendered Lord Nelville very unhappy. He suffered cruelly by being separated from Corinna, without having the time or the liberty necessary to form or to pursue any fixed plan. He passed six weeks in London, without mixing in the world, solely occupied with the moment when he should see Corinna,

and suffering extremely from the time he was obliged to lose away from her. At length he resolved to employ those days of expectation in a visit to Lady Edgermond, at Northumberland, to determine her to acknowledge authentically that Corinna was the daughter of Lord Edgermond, and that the report of her death was falsely circulated; his friends shewed him the public papers which contained very unfavourable insinuations respecting the existence of Corinna, and he felt an ardent desire to restore her that rank and consideration which were justly her due.

CHAP. V.

OSWALD set out for the estate of Lady Edgermond, and reflected with emotion, that he was going to visit the abode in which Corinna had passed so many years. He also felt some embarrassment from the necessity he was under of acquainting Lady Edgermond with his determination to renounce her daughter; and this medley of different feelings, at once gave birth to agitation and thought. The places he saw, in advancing towards the North of England, gave rise more and more to thoughts of Scotland, and the remembrance of his father, incessantly present to

his memory, penerated more deeply into his heart. When arrived at Lady Edgermond's, he was struck with the taste which appeared in the arrangement of the garden and the castle. The mistress of the house was not yet ready to receive him; he took a walk in the park, and perceived at a distance, through the leaves, a young female of most elegant form, and whose flaxen hair appearing in ringlets, from beneath her hat, was of most admirable beauty. She was reading with great attention. Oswald recognized her for Lucilia, although he had not seen her for three years, and having passed in that time from infancy to adolescence, she was amazingly improved. He approached her, and in his salutation, forgetting that he was in England, he was going to take her hand, in order to kiss it respectfully, according to the Italian custom; when the young lady drew back, blushing exces-

sively, and making him a low curtsy, said :—" Sir, I will inform my mother that you desire to see her, and immediately returned to the house. Lord Neville remained struck with admiration of the dignified and modest air of this truly angelical creature.

Lucilia had scarcely reached her sixteenth year. Her features were remarkably delicate ; her figure was rather too tall for her years ; for a little weakness was observable in her gait, and in her complexion, which was extremely beautiful ; the lily and rose seemed to struggle for dominion. Her blue eyes were so often cast down, that her physiognomy was chiefly distinguished by that delicacy of complexion which betrayed, unknown to herself, those emotions which her profound reserve concealed in every other way. Oswald, since his voyage to the South, had lost the idea of such a figure,

and of such expression. He was seized with an involuntarily sentiment of respect; he reproached himself for having accosted her with so much familiarity, and reaching the castle, as soon as he saw that Lucilia had entered it, his thoughts turned upon the celestial purity of a young girl who has never quitted her mother's eye, and who knows no human passion but filial love.

Lady Edgermond was alone when she received Lord Nelville: he had seen her twice with his father, some years before, but had not particularly noticed her. He now observed her with attention, to compare her with the portrait Corinna had drawn of her. He found it true in many respects; but there appeared to him more sensibility in the looks of Lady Edgermond than Corinna had attributed to her, and he therefore conceived that she was not so experienced as he, in divin-

ing the character of a reserved physiognomy. This first object with Lady Edgermond was to prevail upon her to acknowledge Corinna, by annulling all that had been done to excite a belief of her death. He began the conversation by speaking of Italy, and of the pleasures which he had found there.—“It is an amusing retreat for a gentleman,” observed Lady Edgermond, “but I should be extremely sorry, if a female, for whom I felt any interest, could be long attached to that country.—“Yet,” answered Lord Nelville, already wounded by this insinuation, “I have met the most superior of women there.”—“That may be, as far as regards talents,” replied Lady Edgermond; “but an honest man seeks other qualities than those in the partner of his life.”—“And finds them too,” interrupted Oswald, with warmth.—He was about to continue and explain openly, that which was only glanced at

on both sides, when Lucilia entered the room, and approaching, whispered her mother, who said aloud—"No, child, you cannot go and dine with your cousin to-day ; you must stay to dinner here with Lord Nelville."—Lucilia, at these words, blushed more deeply than in the garden, then sitting down by the side of her mother, she resumed her embroidery, without raising her eyes, or mixing in the conversation.

Lord Nelville was almost vexed at this conduct ; for it was probable that Lucilia was not ignorant that their union was in question, and though the captivating figure of Lucilia struck him more and more, he recollected all that Corinna had said to him of the probable effects of that rigid system of education which Lady Edgermond gave her daughter. In England, young girls have generally more liberty than married women, and reason as well

as morality explains this custom ; but Lady Edgermond thought the most severe reserve necessary to females in every condition. Lord Nelville wished to inform her Ladyship of his intentions respecting Corinna, as soon as they might be alone ; but Lucilia did not leave the room, and Lady Edgermond maintained a conversation till the hour of dinner with that simple, but firm reasoning which inspired Lord Nelville with respect. He would willingly have combated opinions so determined upon every point, and which were frequently discordant with his own ; but he felt that a single word that did not agree with Lady Edgermond's ideas might lead her to form an opinion of him that nothing could ever alter ; he, therefore, hesitated to take a step that might be irreparable with a lady who admitted no shades of distinction, no excep-

tions, and judged of every thing by general and positive rules.

Dinner was announced, and Lucilia approached to give her arm to her mother, whom Oswald then observed, to walk with great difficulty.—“ I am afflicted” said she, “ with a very painful, and, perhaps, mortal disease.”—Lucilia grew pale at these words. Lady Edgermond remarking it, added tenderly: “ the attentions of my daughter have, however, saved my life once, and will, perhaps, prolong my days for a considerable time to come.”—Lucilia hung down her head to conceal what she felt. When she raised it again, her eyes were still moist with tears; but she had not dared even to take the hand of her mother; all had passed at the bottom of her heart, and her only aim towards those present, was to conceal from them how she was affected. Oswald

was deeply moved by this reserve, this constraint ; and his imagination so lately assailed by eloquence and passion, found a delicious repose in the cloud of modesty that surrounded Lucilia.

During dinner, Lucilia wishing to spare her mother the smallest fatigue, did the honours of the table, with the most unvaried attention ; she never spoke, but when she invited the guests to partake of the different dishes ; but these insignificant words were pronounced with the most enchanting sweetness, and Lord Neville asked himself, how actions and phrases of such trivial import, could so awaken all his soul. A woman ought to possess, said he to himself, either the genius of Corinna, which exceeds all that the imagination can desire, or that mysterious veil of silence and modesty, which permits every man to suppose in her those virtues and sentiments which he desires.

Lady Edgermond and her daughter arose from table, and Nelville wished to follow them ; but her Ladyship was so scrupulously faithful to the custom of leaving at the dessert, that she desired him to remain till she and her daughter had prepared tea in the parlour, and Oswald joined them in a quarter of an hour. The evening passed without his being left alone a moment with Lady Edgermond, for Lucilia did not leave her. He knew not what to do, and was about to set out for the neighbouring town, proposing to return the next day, and speak to Lady Edgermond, when she offered him a bed. He immediately accepted her offer, without attaching any importance to it ; but soon repented having done so ; because he remarked in the looks of her Ladyship that she considered his consent as an indication that he still thought of her daughter. He, therefore, imme-

diately determined to solicit a private conversation with her Ladyship, which she appointed for the following morning.

Lady Edgermond desired to be conducted to the garden. Oswald offered her his assistance, when looking at him stedfastly, she said, "Very well,"—Lucilia resigned her mother's arm to him, saying, in a very low voice, for fear of being heard by her parent:—"Walk gently, my Lord." He startled at these words, spoken in secrecy. It was so, that his sensibility was to be excited by the speech of this angelic creature, who did not seem formed for earthly affections.—Oswald did not think that the emotion he felt at that moment was injurious to Corinna, it seemed to him only an involuntary homage to the almost divine purity of Lucilia. They returned to evening prayer, at which all the servants regularly

attended. They were assembled in the great hall, and were for the most part old and infirm, having served the parents of Lord and Lady Edgermond. Oswald was greatly moved by this spectacle, which brought to his mind what he had often seen under his paternal roof.—Every body knelt down except Lady Edgermond, who was prevented by her disorder; but who joined her hands, and cast down her eyes with the most becoming devotion.

Lucilia was on her knees by the side of her mother, and it was she who read this evening service, which was composed of a chapter from the New Testament, and a prayer adapted to Rural and Domestic Life. This prayer was composed by Lady Edgermond, and there was in its language a kind of severity which formed a contrast with the soft and timid voice of the reader; but this very severity of expres-

sion increased the effect of the last words, which Lucilia pronounced in trembling. After having prayed for the servants of the house, for her parents, for the king, and her native country, she concluded thus: "Grant us also the grace O God! that the young maiden of this house may live and die, her soul unsullied by a single thought, or a single sentiment, that is not conformable to her duty; and may her mother, who will soon return to thee, obtain pardon for her own sins through the virtues of her only child."

Lucilia repeated this prayer every day; but on this occasion, in presence of Oswald, she was affected more than usual, and the tears fell from her eyes before she had finished the orison, and was able to cover her face with her hands in order to hide her feelings. But Oswald had witnessed a tender sympathy, blended with respect, take possession of his heart: he

contemplated that air of juvenility, so nearly allied to infancy, that look which seemed to express the recent impression of its native skies. So charming a countenance, in the midst of so many visages, expressive of age and malady, seemed the image of Divine pity. Lord Nelville reflected on the austere and retired life led by this unparalleled beauty, deprived thus of all the pleasures and of all the attentions of life, and his soul was penetrated with the purest emotion. The mother of Lucilia merited and obtained respect. She was more rigid towards herself than any other. The limits of her mind were to be attributed rather to the extreme rigour of her principles than to any natural want of intelligence; and in the midst of all the restrictions she had imposed on herself, in the midst of all her stiffness, natural and acquired, was a passion for her daughter the more pro-

found, as the asperity of her character proceeded from a suppressed sensibility, and gave additional strength to the only affection which she had not stifled.

At ten o'clock silence reigned over the whole house, and Oswald was able to reflect, at his ease, upon the day which he had just passed. He did not own to himself that Lucilia had produced an impression on his heart. Perhaps even that was not yet true; but although Corinna enchanted the imagination in a thousand ways, there was a kind of musical charm, if it may be so expressed, peculiar only to Lucilia. His ideas of domestic happiness more easily accommodated themselves to the retreat of Northumberland than to the triumphal Car of Corinna: in effect, Oswald could not dissimulate that Lucilia was the wife which his father would have chosen for him; but he loved Corinna, and was beloved by her

in return ; he had bound himself under the solemn engagement of an oath never to form any other tie, and that was sufficient for him to persist in the design of declaring to Lady Edgermond, next day, his intention of espousing Corinna. He went to sleep in thinking of her, and fancied he saw Lucilia passing lightly before him, in the form of an angel ; he awoke, and wished to drive away from him this dream ; but as soon as he had closed his eyes afresh, it appeared to him again, and the last time, this figure seemed to fly towards him. He awoke again, and regretted that he could not retain the object, which had disappeared from his eyes. Day then began to break ; Oswald descended in order to walk out.

CHAP. VI.

THE sun was just risen, and Lord Nelville believed there was nobody yet awake in the house. He was deceived: Lucilia was already in the balcony, drawing. Her hair which she had not yet dressed was floating in the wind; so that she resembled the Seraphic being he had seen in his dream, and he startled at the sight of her as at a supernatural appearance; but he immediately after felt ashamed at being thus affected by so simple a circumstance. He remained sometime before this balcony. He accosted Lucilia; but could not attract her notice; for she

never removed her eyes from her work. He continued his walk, and desired then more than ever to see Corinna, that she might dissipate those vague impressions which he could not explain: there was something mysterious in the pleasing emotions which Lucilia inspired him with, and he could have desired that the splendor of Corinna's genius might eclipse this fleeting image which assumed a thousand forms to his sight.

On his return to the parlour, he found Lucilia there, who was placing the drawing she had just made in a little brown frame, opposite her mother's tea-table. Oswald looked at this drawing—it was only a white rose on its stalk, but designed with the most perfect grace.—“You can paint then,” said Oswald to Lucilia.—“No my Lord, I can only imitate flowers, and of those only such as are easy to take off; we have no drawing

master here, and the little I know, I am indebted for to a sister who used to give me lessons.”—In uttering these words, she sighed. Lord Nelville blushed deeply, and said to her:—“What is become of that sister?”—“She is no longer living,” replied Lucilia; “but I shall ever regret her.”—Oswald perceived that Lucilia was deceived, like the rest of the world, as to her sister’s destiny; but the words, “*I shall ever regret her,*” seemed to discover an amiable disposition, and he was affected with it. Lucilia was about to retire, perceiving suddenly she was alone with Lord Nelville, when her mother entered. She gave her daughter a look, which at once spoke astonishment and severity, and made a sign to her to go out. This look explained to Oswald what he did not know before—that Lucilia did something very extraordinary, according to what she was accustomed to, in remaining with him

some minutes, without the presence of her mother; and he was touched with it in the same manner that he would have been with any distinguished mark of attention shewn by another.

Lady Edgermond sat down, and dismissed her servants, who had supported her to her arm-chair; she was very pale, and her lips trembled as she offered a cup of tea to Lord Nelville. He observed this agitation, which encreased his own embarrassment; however, animated by the desire of rendering service to her whom he loved, he began the conversation.—“Madam,” said he to Lady Edgermond, “I have been much acquainted in Italy, with a female who must interest you particularly.”—“I do not believe it,” answered her Ladyship, “for no person in that country can interest me.”—“I imagined, however,” continued Lord Nelville, “that the daughter of your husband ought to

have some claim upon your affection.”—
“ If the daughter of my husband,”
replied Lady Edgermond, “ were as in-
different to her duty as to her rank and
consideration, I certainly could not wish
her any harm ; but I should be glad, never
to hear her spoken of.”—“ And if that
daughter, abandoned by you, Madam,”
said Oswald, with warmth, “ were the
most justly celebrated female in the world,
for her various and admirable talents,
could you always disdain her ?” —
“ Equally so, on that account,” replied
Lady Edgermond, “ I esteem not those
talents which abstract a woman from her
real duties. There are actresses, musi-
cians, and artists enough to amuse the
world ; but women of our rank have no-
thing to do but obey their husbands, and
attend to the bringing up of their chil-
dren.”—“ What !” replied Lord Nelville,
“ would you blame those talents which

proceed from the soul, and which cannot exist without the most exalted character, and the most sensible heart, those talents which are united to the most attractive goodness, to the most generous disposition ; would you blame them, I say, because they extend the mind, because they give to virtue itself a more vast empire, and a more general influence ?”—“ To virtue ?” replied her Ladyship, with a bitter smile : “ I do not know what you mean by this word thus applied. The virtue of a female who has left her paternal mansion ? The virtue of a female who is settled in Italy, leading an independant life, and receiving the attentions of every one, to say no more, giving an example still more pernicious to others than to herself ; abdicating her rank, her family, and the name of her father.”—“ Madam,” interrupted Oswald, “ it is a sacrifice which she has made to your desire—to

your daughter ; she was afraid of injuring you by preserving your name.”—
“ She feared this,” said Lady Edgermond,
“ she felt then that she was dishonouring it ?”—“ It is too much,” said Oswald, with violence “ Corinna Edgermond, will soon be Lady Nelville, and we shall then see whether you will refuse to acknowledge her for the daughter of your husband ! You judge according to vulgar rules, a female gifted as woman never was yet, an angel of mind and goodness, uniting the most admirable genius, with a timid sensibility, possessing a sublime imagination, and unlimited generosity ; a female who may have erred, because so astonishing a superiority does not accord with ordinary life ; but of so fine a soul that she is above her faults, and with a single word or action can efface them all ; she confers more honor on him whom she has chosen for a protector, than the queen of the

world could upon the man she should make her husband.”—“ You will, perhaps, my Lord,” answered Lady Edgermond, making an effort to contain herself, “ you will, perhaps, accuse my limited mind ; but there is nothing in all that you have just told me within the reach of my comprehension. I understand by morality only the exact observance of established rules ; beyond that, I see nothing but qualities badly employed, which, at the best are deserving of pity.”—“ The world would have been very barren, Madam,” answered Oswald, “ if neither genius nor enthusiasm had ever been conceived, and human nature had been reduced to so regular and monotonous a thing. But without protracting farther an useless discussion, I come to demand, formally, whether you will acknowledge Miss Edgermond for your daughter-in-law, when she shall be Lady Nelville.”—“ Still less on

that account," replied her Ladyship; "for I owe it to the memory of your father to prevent, if I can, so fatal an union."—"How, my father?" said Oswald, who was electrified at this name.—"Are you ignorant," continued her Ladyship, "that he refused the hand of Miss Edgermond for you when she was yet guilty of no fault, when, with the most perfect sagacity, he foresaw what she would one day become?"—"How! you know—"—"The letter of your father to my Lord Edgermond, on this subject, is in the hands of Mr. Dickson, his old friend," interrupted Lady Edgermond. "I remitted it to him when I learnt your connexion with Corinna in Italy, in order that he might shew it to you on your return; an office that did not become me."

Oswald was silent for some moments; then he replied:—"What I ask of you, Madam, is no more than an act of justice,

it is what you owe yourself.—Destroy the reports that you have sanctioned respecting the death of your daughter-in-law, and honourably acknowledge her for what she is—the daughter of Lord Edgermond.”

“ I will not contribute in any shape,” answered her Ladyship, “ to the greatest calamity of your life ; if the present state of Corinna, deprived, as she is, of name and support, be a cause why you may not espouse her, God and your father forbid that I should ever remove that obstacle !”

—“ Madam,” answered Lord Nelville, “ the misfortune of Corinna will only bind me more closely to her.”—“ Well,” replied Lady Edgermond, with a vivacity in which she had never indulged, and which undoubtedly proceeded from the regret she felt at losing for her daughter a husband so suitable in many respects, “ well,” continued she, “ render yourselves both unhappy then ; for she will be so as

well as you : this country is odious to her ; she cannot bend to our manners, nor conform to the severity of our domestic discipline. She must have a theatre to display all those talents which you prize so much, and which render life so difficult ; you will find her grow tired of this country, and desire to return to Italy—she will drag you thither along with her : you will quit your friends, your native land, that of your father, and all for an amiable foreigner, who would easily forget you, did you desire it ; for there is nothing more changeable than these great minds. Deep affections are only for what you call mediocre wives, that is to say, for those who only live for their husband and their children.” The violence of the emotion, which had made Lady Edgermond talk thus—she, who always habituated to constraint, had, perhaps never once before in the whole course of her life given such

scope to her feelings—the violence of her emotion was a shock to her already disordered nerves, and as she left off speaking, she found herself ill.

Oswald rang the bell to bring assistance to her. Lucilia entered the room terrified, and hastened to her mother's aid, darting at Oswald an uneasy look, which seemed to say to him, "Is it you that have made my mother unwell?" And which deeply affected Lord Nelville. When Lady Edgermond came to herself, he endeavoured to testify his concern; but she repelled his advances with coldness, and blushed to think that by her emotion she had been wanting in pride, and injured her daughter's consequence, by betraying the desire which she felt to give her Lord Nelville for a husband. She motioned Lucilia to withdraw, and said:—"My lord, you will consider yourself, at all events, free from any kind of engagement which might have existed

between us. My daughter is so young that she has not been informed of the project which your father and I had formed. It is, however, necessary that you should not frequent my house so long as my daughter shall remain unmarried."—"I shall then confine myself," answered Oswald, "to treat with you in writing concerning the destiny of one whom I will never forsake."—"You will do as you please," answered Lady Edgermond, with a smothered voice;—and Lord Nelville took his leave.

In passing the avenue on horseback, he perceived at a distance in the wood, the elegant figure of Lucilia. He slackened the pace of his horse to behold her still, when it appeared to him that Lucilia was following the same direction as himself, concealing herself behind the trees. The high road passed before a pavillion at the extremity of the park. Oswald remarked that Lucilia entered that pavilion: he passed

before it with emotion ; but without being able to discover her. He turned his head several times after he had passed, and remarked in another part, which commanded a view of the road, a slight agitation in the leaves of one of the trees near the pavilion. He stopped opposite this tree ; but no longer perceived the slightest movement. Uncertain whether he had conjectured rightly, he set off, then on a sudden returned with the rapidity of lighting, as if he had dropped something on the road, when he saw Lucilia by the way side, and saluted her respectfully. Lucilia let down her veil with precipitation, and plunged into the wood, not reflecting that in concealing herself thus, she avowed the motive that had brought her out ; the poor girl had never felt any thing so criminal in her life as the sentiment which induced in her a desire to see Lord Nelville pass, and she thought herself ruined by being

discovered. Oswald comprehended it all, and felt sweetly flattered by this innocent proof of interest, so timidly and so sincerely expressed.—No person, thought he, can be more sincere than Corinna; but, at the same time, nobody is better acquainted with herself and others: it would be necessary to teach Lucilia both the love she felt and that which she inspired. But can this charm of a day suffice for a whole life? and since this amiable ignorance of ourselves does not last, since we must, at length, penetrate into our own soul, and know what we feel, is not the candour which survives that discovery better than the candour which precedes it?

He thus compared Corinna and Lucilia in his reflections; but this comparison was at present, at least, he thought so—only a simple amusement of his mind, and he did not suppose that it would ever occupy him more seriously.

CHAP. VII.

ON leaving the house of Lady Edgermond, Oswald repaired to Scotland. The emotion which Lucilia had excited in his mind, and the passion he cherished for Corinna, all gave place to other feelings, at the aspect of those scenes where he had passed his life with his father: the circumstances of the past year, which had so diverted his memory from his parent, he considered as a subject of reproach, and thought himself no longer worthy to enter that abode which he wished he had never quitted. Alas ! after the loss of what we

most love in the world, how can we be satisfied with any other situation than that of profound retreat! We cannot mix in the busy world without neglecting, in some degree, the religious sorrow we owe to those who are no more. In vain does their remembrance dwell at the bottom of our heart; we yield to that activity of the living, which removes the idea of the dead, as painful, useless, or at least, fatiguing. In effect, if solitude does not prolong reverie and respect, existence, such as it is, seizes upon the soul afresh, and fills it with worldly interests, desires, and passions. This want of something to divert the attention from grief, is a miserable necessity of human nature; and though Providence has willed it so, to enable man to support death, yet, often, in the midst of that distraction which he seeks, he feels a secret remorse, and fancies he hears a plaintive voice whisper to him: “*you*

whom I loved, have you too forgotten me ?”

Oswald was occupied by these sentiments as he returned to his paternal abode : he did not feel upon this occasion such despair as when he visited it before ; but his soul was filled with sadness. He saw that time reconciles every body to the loss of those whom they deplore : the domestics no longer mentioned his father’s name ; each one had resumed his habitual occupations. They had closed the ranks, and the generation of children was growing up to replace that of the parents. Oswald shut himself up in his father’s room, where he found his cloak, his cane, and his arm chair, all in the same place ; but what was become of that voice which answered to his, that paternal heart which palpitated on beholding him ? Lord Neville was plunged in profound meditation. —“ O human destiny !” cried he, his face

bathed with tears ; “ what is thy will of us ? Is so much existence given to us only for annihilation, so much thought only for the silence of the grave ! No, no, he hears me—my only friend—he is present ; he beholds my tears, and our immortal souls will join each other. O my father ! O my God ! guide me to life eternal ! Those souls of iron, which seem to possess in themselves the motionless qualities of physical nature, are strangers alike to indecision and to repentance ; but can beings composed of imagination, of sensibility, and of conscience, take one step without fearing to go astray ! They seek duty for a guide, and duty itself becomes obscure in their sight, if the Deity does not reveal it in the bottom of the heart.

At evening Oswald went to visit the favourite walk of his father : he followed his image through the trees. Alas ! who has not sometimes hoped, in the ardour of

his prayers, that a beloved shade would appear to him? that the force of love would obtain a miracle in his favour? vain hope! all is ignorance on this side of the grave. Uncertainty of uncertainties, you do not occupy vulgar minds! The more thought is ennobled, the more it is invincibly attracted towards the abysses of reflection. Whilst Oswald was in this pensive mood, he heard a carriage in the avenue, from which alighted an old man, who advanced slowly towards him. It was Mr. Dickson, the old friend of his father. Oswald advanced to receive him with an emotion which he had never felt at the sight of that gentleman before this moment.

CHAP. VIII.

IN nothing did Mr. Dickson equal the father of Oswald : he possessed neither his superiority of mind, nor his dignity of character ; but he was with him at the moment of his death. He was born in the same year, and it might be said that he tarried a short time behind only to carry him news of this world. Oswald gave his arm to help him up the steps ; he felt a charm in thus yielding support to old age, the only point in which Mr. Dickson resembled his father. This old gentleman had witnessed the birth of Os-

wald, and he began, without ceremony, to discourse of all that concerned him. He highly blamed his connexion with Corinna ; but his weak arguments would have had much less ascendancy on Oswald's mind than those of Lady Edgermond, if Mr. Dickson had not put into his hands the letter which his father, Lord Nelville, wrote to Lord Edgermond when he desired to break off the marriage projected between his son and Corinna, then Miss Edgermond. Oswald took this letter, written in 1791, during his first tour to France, and trembling, read as follows.

The Letter of Oswald's Father to Lord Edgermond.

“ Will you pardon me, my friend, for proposing an alteration in our project of family union ? My son is eighteen

months younger than your eldest daughter ; it would be better to reserve for him your other daughter, Lucilia, who is twelve years younger than her sister. I might confine myself to this motive for altering my mind ; but, as I knew the age of Miss Edgermond, when I asked her for Oswald, I should think myself wanting in the confidence of friendship, if I did not inform you that there are other reasons which render me averse to this marriage. We have been acquainted for these twenty years past ; surely then we may speak freely upon the subject of our children, especially as they are yet sufficiently young to be modified by our counsels. Your daughter is a charming girl ; but she appears to me like one of those Grecian beauties, who enchanted and subdued the world. Do not be offended at the idea which this comparison may suggest. Undoubtedly your daughter has

neither received from you, nor found in her own heart, any thing but the purest principles, and the purest sentiments ; but she has a natural disposition to please, to captivate, and to produce effect. She has more talents than self-love ; but, talents so rare must necessarily excite a desire of being called into notice ; and, I know not what scene could suffice that activity of mind, that impetuosity of the imagination, and that ardent character which is felt in all her words ; she would necessarily prevail on my son to quit England ; for such a woman could not be happy there—Italy is her proper sphere.

“ She must enjoy that independant existence, subject only to the dominion of fancy. Our country life, our domestic habits, would necessarily oppose the bent of her disposition. A man, born in our happy native land, must, before all things, be an Englishman : he must fulfill the

duties of a citizen, since he has the happiness to be one ; and in those countries, where political institutions give men so many honourable occasions of shewing themselves in active life, women must remain in the shade. How could you expect a female, with the endowments of your daughter, to be satisfied with such a lot ? Take my advice, marry her in Italy : her religion, her tastes, and her talents are congenial to that soil. If my son were to espouse Miss Edgermond, he would certainly love her tenderly ; for no female can be so capable of inspiring that passion ; and, to please her, he would introduce foreign customs into his family. Soon he would lose that national spirit, those prejudices, if you will, which unite us in ourselves, and make our nation a body, an association, free, but indissoluble, which can only perish with the last remaining Englishman. My son would soon

feel uncomfortable in England, seeing that his wife was no longer happy there. He possesses, I know it, all the weakness of sensibility ; he would therefore settle in Italy, and such an expatriation, were I alive to witness it, would bring me to the grave, not only because I should be deprived of my son ; but because he would be deprived of the honour of serving his native country.

“ What an ignoble fate for an inhabitant of our mountains, to drag a lazy existence in the bosom of Italian pleasure ! A Scotchman his wife’s *Cicisbèe*, if not that of another’s ! Useless to his family, of whom he is no longer the guide, and support ! Such as I know Oswald to be, your daughter would have great empire over him ; I deem it extremely fortunate, therefore, that his present abode in France has kept him from seeing Miss Edgermond, and I presume to intreat you, my dear friend, if I should die before my son

marries, not to let him know your eldest daughter till the youngest has fixt his affections. I hope our long acquaintance may authorize me to presume thus much on your friendship. Inform my son, should it be necessary, of my will, in this regard; I am sure that he will respect it, the more so, should I be no longer numbered with the living.

“ Do every thing in your power also, I beseech you, to bring about the union of Oswald with Lucilia. Though she is quite a child, I have discovered in her features, in the expression of her physiognomy, and in the sound of her voice, the most interesting modesty. 'Tis she who will make a truly English wife, who will compose the happiness of my son. Should I not be alive to witness this union, it will give me joy in another world; and when we shall meet in heaven, my friend, our benedic-

tions, and our prayers, will protect our children.

“ Your’s, most truly,

“ NELVILLE.”

After reading this letter, Oswald preserved a profound silence, which left time to Mr. Dickson to continue his long speech without interruption. He admired the sagacity of his friend, who had formed so correct an opinion of Miss Edgermond, though he was far, as he said, from anticipating her improper conduct since. He declared, in the name of Oswald’s father, that such a marriage would be an insult to his memory. Oswald learnt from him, that during his fatal abode in France, a year after this letter had been written, in 1792, his father had found no consolation but in the house of Lady Edgermond, where he had passed a whole summer, occupied with the education of Lucilia, with

whom he was particularly pleased. In effect, without design, but also without premeditation, Mr. Dickson attacked the heart of Oswald in the most vulnerable part.

It was thus, that all combined to overthrow the happiness of the absent Corinna, who had no defence but her letters, which from time to time brought her to the recollection of Oswald. She had to combat, at once, the nature of things, the influence of country, the memory of a father, the conspiracy of friends in favour of the beaten track of human action, and the rising charms of a young maiden, so in harmony with the pure and calm hopes of domestic life.

END OF VOL. IV.

R. Juigné, Printer,
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NOTES

TO THE FOURTH VOLUME.

PAGE 58, line 9.

The reader must not confound the name of *Corinna* with that of *Corilla*, an Italian improvisatrix, of whom every body has heard. *Corinna* was a Grecian woman, celebrated for her lyrical poetry ; Pindar himself received lessons from her.

Page 91, line 22.

The idea of *Corinna*, that the diamond discovers perfidy, is supported by an ancient tradition, which is to be found in some Spanish verses of a singular species. They are addressed by Prince Ferdinand of Portugal, in a tragedy of Calderoni, to the King of Fez, who has made him prisoner. This Prince prefers dying in captivity to delivering up to a Moorish king a Christian city, which his brother, King Edward, offered for his ransom.--- The Moor incensed at this, causes the noble Prince

to suffer the most unworthy treatment, and the latter, to soften his tyrant, reminds him, that mercy and generosity are the true characteristics of supreme power. He cites for examples, all that is royal in the universe: the lion, the dolphin, and the eagle, among animals, and among plants and precious stones also, he seeks those traits of natural sympathy which are attributed to such as rank highest among them. 'Tis this gives him cause to say, that the diamond, which defies the force of steel, breaks of itself, and crumbles into dust, to inform the wearer of approaching treachery. We know not whether this manner of considering all nature as in affinity with the sentiments and with the destiny of man be mathematically just; but certain it is, that it pleases the imagination, and that poetry in general, and the Spanish poetry in particular, derives considerable beauties from it.

I am only acquainted with Calde-roni through the German translation of Schlegel. But it is universally known in Germany, that this writer, one of the first poets of his country, could transfer to his own language, with a perfection not common, the poetical beauties of the Spanish, the English, the Italian, and the Portuguese. We may form a lively idea of any original from such a translation.

Staël

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